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Performing Femininity within Masculine Circles: A Study of Negation in the Works of Mina Loy

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Résumé

Dans ce mémoire, je me propose d'examiner l'esthétique de la négation dans l'œuvre de l'écrivaine anglaise Mina Loy (1882-1966). À partir des observations de Christina Walter sur l'anxiété éprouvée par Loy vis-à-vis de l'impersonnalité, je m'intéresserai à la création par cette dernière d'une nouvelle forme de littérature « Féminine » liée à une esthétique de la négation fort différente de l'esthétique de l'impersonnalité promue par ses contemporains Ezra Pound et T.S. Elliot. J'étudierai les techniques littéraires employées par Loy comme réponse subversive aux tendances machistes et limitatives du canon moderniste. Je commencerai ma recherche en analysant des débats et des textes tirés de la revue féministe, *The Freewoman* pour en dégager les thèmes que Loy finira par intégrer à son « Feminist Manifesto » et, par extension, à son esthétique de la négation. Ensuite, j'interrogerai le rapport entre Loy et la désignation « femme de lettres. » Je soulignerai notamment l'effacement de la perspective uniquement genrée de son poème « The Effectual Marriage » par la réécriture problématique qu'en a faite Ezra Pound. Enfin, par la mise en contraste du « Feminist Manifesto » de Loy, du « Manifesto of the Futurist Woman » de Valentine de Saint-Point, et du « Founding and Manifesto of Futurism » de Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, je chercherai à comprendre ce qu'écrire en tant que futuriste et que féministe signifiait pour Loy. Pour conclure, j'élargirai ma recherche en proposant une lecture de l'histoire ancienne et récente du féminisme à travers l'œuvre de Loy. En comparant le féminisme moderne et le féminisme contemporain, j'ai l'intention de prouver que la poésie permet de redécouvrir des idéologies perdues ou mises de côté.

Mots-clés: Mina Loy, négation, impersonnalité, petites revues, la nouvelle femme, femme de lettres, féminisme, modernisme, futurisme, poétique.

Summary

In this thesis, I am concerned with British writer Mina Loy's (1882-1966) Negation aesthetic. Assisted by Christina Walter's observations on Loy's fraught relationship with personality and impersonality, I contend that this dissatisfaction with binary classification systems has led to Loy's avoidance of the limitative and misogynist nature of the canonizing process. By first approaching the debates and prose found within the feminist periodical *The Freewoman*, I locate the gendered topics that would later influence Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" and, by proxy, her Negation aesthetic. Secondly, I focus on the question of what it means to be a "woman writer" in an otherwise masculine milieu. Focusing on Ezra Pound's problematic rewriting of Loy's poem "The Effectual Marriage," I call attention to his erasure of Loy's uniquely gendered perspective. Furthermore, by contrasting Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" with Valentine de Saint-Point's "Manifesto of the Futurist Woman" and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's "The Founding and the Manifesto of Futurism," I develop a deeper understanding of what it meant for Loy to write as both a Futurist and a feminist of sorts. To conclude, I further my research by proposing a rereading of feminist history by underlining the similarities between the views expressed by both Loy and contemporary feminists. In this way, I introduce the notion that literature can be used as a means of retrieving lost or ignored ideologies.

Keywords: Mina Loy, negation, impersonality, little magazines, new woman, woman writer, feminism, modernism, futurism, poetics.

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To Cindy

and the countless other New Women in my life.

I couldn't have done it without you.

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1. Introduction: A New "Feminine" Voice for the Modern Era

Scholars of Mina Loy's work agree that both her biography and her body of work offer a difficult, unclassifiable persona, one that rarely lends itself to binary classification systems. Roger L. Conover, for one, associates this issue with what he calls Loy's "anti-career, [one] marked by so many seeming contradictions, counter-allegiances, and inconsistencies that she was often considered unbalanced" ("Introduction" xiii). This "anti-career" has been experienced by Loy scholars as an inability to situate her within the modernist canon, a particular literary genre, or a consistent political stance. Christina Walter provides an example of this inconsistency of viewpoints by underlining Loy's "fraught relationship to personality and, in turn, impersonality" ("Getting Impersonal" 664). As she explains:

> Loy's early anxiety about impersonality stems principally from her concern about […] the cultural constitution of woman as a "**relative impersonality**," as meaningful only relative to men, and as impersonal when compared to men's individuality. (665-666)

Therefore, what Conover sees as an "anti-career" can more relevantly be identified as an incapacity to accept either personality's overly sentimental aesthetics or impersonality's immediate connection with masculine agendas. Walter likewise suggests that Loy's early anxiety with impersonality shifted towards an impersonal aesthetic of her own making ("Mina Loy," *Modernism Lab*).

I will argue here that Loy's "impersonal" aesthetic is one of simple "Negation." My insistence on avoiding the term "impersonality" altogether stems from Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" and her admonition that women "who adapt themselves to a theoretical valuation of

their sex as a **relative impersonality**, are not yet **Feminine**" (154). The concepts "relative impersonality" and "Feminine," in bold, underlined, and in an enlarged font, are of evident high importance to Loy whose use of capitals or other forms of typographical emphases signal a word whose meaning reaches beyond the literary piece in question[1]. That Loy insists on separating "relative impersonality" from the "Feminine" indicates a disdain for impersonality, which she writes in bold, underlines, but does not capitalize. "Feminine," on the other hand, is equally written in bold and underlined, but is capitalized, exhibiting Loy's belief that a woman that is truly "Feminine" with a capital "F[2]" should avoid impersonality at all costs. This is further proven by her immediate following statement that women should "leave off looking to men to find out what [they] are **not**" and should instead "seek within [themselves] to find out what [they] **are**" (154). Again, Loy uses emphatic formatting to signal both the importance of her statement and her belief that women face a veritable emotional conflict during any attempts at claiming a self-identity. By then stating that women can only be defined through "**Parasitism, & Prostitution—or Negation**" (154), Loy further illustrates the problematics of establishing a Feminine personality.

[1] Loy's poem "There is no Life or Death" uses this tactic to underline the words "Life" (1), "Death" (1), "Love" (5), "Lust" (5), "First" (9), "Last" (9), "Space" (13), and "Time" (13), all words symbolizing larger than life themes of high philosophical meaning. She then fully capitalizes the word "LIFE" (86) in her poem "Parturition," choosing to associate it with the equally capitalized words "Mother" (98), "Maternity (89, 100), and "God" (133, 134) to strengthen the poem's implication that the ability of a mother to give birth grants her God like abilities.

[2] My insistence here and throughout this thesis on capitalizing Loy's use of the word Feminine stems from Loy's own desire to distinguish between a revolutionary "Feminine" with a strong sense of self-awareness, and the generic gender descriptor "feminine." For a more detailed review of Loy's reclaiming of the Feminine refer to my second chapter.

Central to this issue of self-identification lies Loy's argument that women who "are not yet **Feminine**" (154) tend to choose between defining themselves through masculine forms of approbation (thus parasitically latching on to another's personality instead of defining one's self) or through sexual contact, "the only point at which the interests of the sexes merge" (154). However, as we have already established, Loy avoids binary classification systems. Having argued that women's search for self-identity generally leads one to embody the role of parasite or prostitute, she nonetheless establishes a third alternative, one she separates from the two less savoury options with an emphatic em dash: Negation. This more productive route is less defined in Loy's manifesto, and with good reason; to occupy a place of negation, one must stand outside of pre-established definitions at the risk of losing all form of meaning altogether. There lies the crux behind Loy's "anti-career."

Bringing up two further feminine archetypes, "**the mistress, & the mother**" (154), Loy pushes her opposition to binary definitions one step further, underlining that

> the woman who is so incompletely evolved as to be un-self-conscious in sex, will prove a restrictive influence on the temperamental expansion of the next generation; the woman who is a poor mistress will be an incompetent mother (154)

What becomes apparent is Loy's belief that one cannot gain a proper sense of selfhood within a binary system. It is instead through negation or, more precisely, through the occupation of the negative space between opposite ideologies that one finds a fuller sense of self. As Loy explains, "nature has endowed the complete woman with a faculty for expressing herself through all her functions—there are **no restrictions**" (154). It is through negation that restrictive categories such as "parasitism," "prostitution," "the mistress," and "the mother" can be outgrown.

Thus, to mirror Loy's avoidance of binary categories, this thesis chooses to define Loy's work through an aesthetic of Negation as opposed to the more limitative categories of personality and impersonality. It is nonetheless important to note that by using the term Negation to describe Loy's writings, I am not attempting to rebrand Loy, as countless theorists have attempted to do before me (including Ezra Pound, who famously described her poetic style as the embodiment of what he called "logopoeia"). Instead, I propose Negation as an anti-term, a floating descriptor that serves as opposition to, or negates, the categories Loy chose not to embody. As Walter helpfully explains:

> In 'Feminist Manifesto,' she handles [her] wariness [in regards to impersonality] by arranging a set of dialogues and collisions between competing ideologies, allowing her to insist on women's selfhood as opposed to their relative impersonality while nonetheless documenting her unease with contemporary discourses of the self. ("Mina Loy," *Modernism Lab*)

Thus, by insisting on occupying a space outside of polar opposites, Loy inhabits what Jane Malcolm has dubbed the "negative space:" an unclassifiable location of infinite possibility, unrestrained by the often-limiting binaries created by the canonizing process ("Mina Loy," *Studies in Genre*). This between space permits Loy's frequently shocking satire to become a new location for the formation of progressive forms of Feminine representations, portraitures of female characters whose role far surpasses the limited nature of such archetypes as "the mistress" and "the mother." What Conover describes as an "anti-career" can therefore be reread as an artistic performance of sorts, one that avoids categorization through the thwarting of gender stereotypes and the limiting aspects of genre based forms of literature.

Reducing our reading of Loy to catchall classifications such as "feminist," "New Woman," or "modernist poet" can in fact be damaging to any attempt at accurately portraying her version of modernism, for central to Loy's Negation aesthetic is a demand for the abolition of such absolutes. Nevertheless, a cursory study of the various groups and genres her contemporary authors, critics, and readers associated her with is helpful in gaining a better understanding of the literary and political climate that led to the flourishing of her body of work. More specifically, presenting Loy within the broader context of feminist and modernist periodicals helps to elucidate the influences that led Loy to create the politically charged, uniquely Feminine voice that permeates the whole of her literary production.

By approaching Loy's modernism via her participation in various "little magazines," I am able to underline the practical circumstances that led to the creation of her unusual non-space within the modernist canon. For, though Loy was very much integral to the formation of Modernism as we know it, her ambivalence toward the literary genres of her era denote a complex literary persona that is not easily defined. Eluding a "purely thematic analysis" (Burke, "Supposed Persons" 135), Loy wrote poetry and prose that was at times semi-autobiographical, at others almost entirely self-effacing. This contrast only further illustrates what one might call Loy's conflictual self: A "self-effacing" though not entirely impersonal aesthetic that communicates a Feminine reality and political voice whose meaning transcends her era.

To avoid limiting Loy's efforts to a single genre, I have chosen to side-step the traditional approach of studying her poetry and prose as separate unrelated pieces. Instead, my thesis locates the larger themes within the collective whole of her oeuvre. In so doing, I demonstrate that Loy's avoidance of simplistic categories engendered a new modernism, one that was unavoidably

Feminine but never explicitly feminist[3]. This new Feminine modernism was the direct result of Loy's dissatisfaction with her era's feminist attempts at countering gendered limitations. A radical form of poetics that opposes the binary nature of "the mistress, & the mother" (154) categories, Loy's New Feminine truly embodies the era's "New Woman" archetype. Though her portrayal of sexual and romantic relationships expresses intimacy, Loy's tone remains stoic and impersonal. It is this authorial distance that enriches her satirical reading of early twentieth century gender dynamics while equally lending a veracity to the character's interactions.

Where this satirical performance faltered however, was in her overly ethereal nature, as perceived by the reading public. As Conover writes: "there was a rumour circulating around Paris in the twenties that Mina Loy was in fact not a real person" ("Introduction" xii). Though these rumours added to her image as an alluring and mysterious figure, they also hint at a partial explanation for Loy's temporary erasure from modernist history. In being both an embodiment of the new woman and an extreme "other" amongst "others[4]," Loy's dismissal as at best a confusing poet and at worst an inconsequential one, was inevitable. In other words, by insisting on occupying a non-space so as to avoid all form of categorization, Loy dismissed herself from the canon before the critics could.

Though this self-negation may have harmed her writing career in the long run, she herself seemed ambivalent about her lack of fame. Conover quotes her as saying "I was never a poet" (xii), but in true contrarian fashion, she also once stated that "to maintain my incognito, the

[3] The slippage between these two terms is detailed in my first chapter, in which I study Loy's creation of a revolutionary "Feminine" in opposition to the gendered "feminine element" perpetrated by her peers (Loy, "Feminist Manifesto," 153-4).

[4] I refer here both to editor Alfred Kreymborg's Modernist magazine *Others: A Magazine of the New Verse*, and her status as outcast from the Modernist canon.

hazard I chose was—poet" (xii). Like many other Loy discrepancies, the disparity between the two statements hides a deeper significance. She was never a poet, for she defined herself as an artist performing in more fields than one. However, amongst these artistic professions she favoured poetry for it granted her an anonymity she could use to convey social critiques she could not as strongly express through her paintings and theatrical practices. Therefore, by creating a negative space for herself, Loy could test her various shifting worldviews without fear of serious reprisal. The creative results may not have gained traditional notoriety, but recognition was never truly her intention. Instead, she created an oeuvre that encapsulates the essence of an era. Through her careful choice of words, the reader relives the lingering effects of the First World War, the rise of various political agendas (amongst others the Futurists and Suffragettes), the troubled gender dynamics of the times, and the unexpected eruption of the Second World War. To properly appreciate how this captured zeitgeist informs us about our current reality, I will briefly examine the various instances where her poetry was most heavily reprinted and reviewed.

1.1. Women's Studies & the Rediscovery of Mina Loy

Loy first re-emerged in 1944 through what Carolyn Burke calls Kenneth Rexroth's "one-man campaign to make [Loy's work] available" (*Becoming Modern* vi), an effort that would later lead to the 1958 publication of *Lunar Baedeker & Time-Tables* by his close friend Jonathan Williams. Previous to this moment, the greater part of Loy's oeuvre had been lost to the world, having only appeared in her book of poetry, *Lunar Baedeker* (1923), and the small magazines in which she had been featured—most of which had slowly gone out of print. That this first retrospective look at Loy's work occurred around the same time as the rise of second wave

feminism is not coincidental. Nor is the parallel between the mid 1980s shift towards third wave feminism and the publication of Conover's first Loy anthology, *The Last Lunar Baedeker* (1982), and its second edition, *The Lost Lunar Baedeker* (1996).

Interest in Loy's work has surged at times when literary scholarship has responded to shifts in feminist movements, as in the 1980s with the emergence of Women's Studies. In 1987, the *American Quarterly*'s spring issue featured Carolyn Burke's "Getting Spliced: Modernism and Sexual Difference," in which she introduces the concept that "sexual difference can matter as both the 'what' and the 'how' in modernist poetry" (Burke 100), underlining Gertrude Stein, Marianne Moore, and Loy's uniquely gendered approach to writing and reading. In 2009, *Women: A Cultural Review* published Natalya Lusty's "Sexing the Manifesto: Mina Loy, Feminism and Futurism," an analysis of Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" through a feminist and futurist lens. Burke would go on to publish *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy,* now a key work in any Loy scholarship, while Lusty continues to question how gender shapes political and literary modernity. That Loy's presence is felt most predominantly in the field of women's studies leads me to believe that she had a larger effect on our *re*-reading of women modernists than previously assumed. In other words, the negative space created by Loy's unclassifiable persona creates a new Feminine space by natural opposition, one that begs to be explored anew by researchers seeking to understand Loy's work and the feminist moments in which she has been (re)read. In simpler terms: by refusing the "feminist," "new woman," "futurist" epithets, Loy creates new open meanings for each, which leave room for new or forgotten poets, as well as new definitions of what feminism might mean for the modernist woman poet.

To facilitate the understanding of what one could call the "evasive satirical persona" of Loy's Negation aesthetic, this thesis reads her works of prose, "Feminist Manifesto" and *The*

Child and the Parent, as variations on the themes found in her poetry. While her prose uses a more analytical tone to express its values, much of the themes found within mirror those found in her body of poetic work. It is the dual nature of Loy's literary endeavours that grants her the means of expressing intimate, autobiographical elements while maintaining a necessary authorial distance. I am not, however, the first to propose such an approach. Christina Walter calls attention to the links between Loy's unpublished memoir *The Child and the Parent* and the themes found in her poetry, while Lusty's "Sexing the Manifesto" draws an interesting connection between Loy's "Songs to Joannes" and her "Feminist Manifesto." Lusty goes so far as to state that the poem "might be read as a more critically satisfying and sophisticated exploration of women's sexual and emotional resistance and complicity" (246) than the manifesto. Lusty's text is most helpful in her insistence that "both [the poem and the manifesto] perform their antagonisms within the formal constraints of the genres they also aspire to reformulate" (247). I would argue that these "formal constraints" do not serve as restraints for Loy's endeavour, but instead serve as a framework from within which Loy can exercise these very reformulations. Thus, "Feminist Manifesto" reflects the exclamatory nature of a statement of principles, but uses this template as a means of expressing matters that are intimately connected to Loy's personal world views. On the other hand, a poem such as "Songs to Joannes" portrays a feminine sexuality that would have been shocking to an early twentieth century reader through a satirical reclaiming of the romanticists' poetic form.

My thesis is an attempt at understanding the various ways prose and poetry might hinder or assist one another when placed side by side on the pages of a little magazine. For this reason, I will follow a similar analytical path as Walter and Lusty by insisting on the importance of considering Loy's work as a whole and not as unconnected parts. Although Loy's celebrated line

"Pig Cupid his rosy snout / Rooting erotic garbage" (3-4), featured in her poem "Songs to Joannes," is an evident portrayal of the revolutionary re-appropriation of sexual desire, it is not the only poem to illustrate such a view. "Virgins Plus Curtains Minus Dots," "The Effectual Marriage," and "Parturition" equally portray variations of women's unanswered desires. It is by opposing these poems with Loy's prose, first separately, then as a uniform whole, that Loy's clever dismantling of binary concepts becomes most apparent. However, for such an analysis to be feasible, a proper understanding of Loy's use of satire is essential.

1.2. Loy, Satire, & Feminism

Loy was visibly uncomfortable with the gender debates of her era, which led her to write with a witty bitterness, or satirical tinge. Used in this way, satire becomes a means of avoiding the all too serious nature of absolute categorization, while maintaining a very serious social critique. This allows Loy to develop a unique Feminine voice that camouflages itself amongst traditionally masculine genres, effectively utilizing their promotional institutions, while retooling and critiquing their predominant literary forms.

Jonathan Greenberg writes that "most definitions of satire […] have seen a moral aim as a necessary component of the mode [one that] separates satire from pure comedy" (3). Most importantly, he indicates that "the objects of satiric laughter are experienced not as trivial but as 'harmful or destructive'" (3). Following such an understanding of satire, Loy's mockery of the gender wars therefore must not be misconstrued as simply a humorous underlining of injustice, but read as a political statement. This declaration retools Futurist language so as to demand an "Absolute Demolition" (Loy, "Feminist Manifesto" 153) of the preconceived notions of womanhood. This was not a one-time statement, not a simple comedic jab at the Futurist and

feminist movements of her era. This absolute demolition can be found throughout Loy's writings, embodied within the various Feminine identities she created for herself. Loy's plea that women should "realize [them]selves" through an unmasking of "all [their] pet illusions" (153), was just as much a demand upon herself as it was upon her readers, a promise to remain true to her rebellious literary voice.

Her war with both the misogynist views of the Futurists and what she saw as the overly simplistic demands of the suffragette movement therefore comes down to her belief that women's only means of escaping the enslaving fixtures of the early 20th century's patriarchal system was to re-appropriate this negation of the self. A space where the various new Feminine identities offered by her oeuvre become possible, this negative space becomes a location of possibility where one can become the godly birthing being of "Parturition" or the sexually awakened voice of "Songs to Joannes." Rereading Loy's work in this fashion, as a uniquely interconnected life's project, one that is both unclassifiable and divergent from what can be understood as "traditional" literary modes, reveals the presence of proto- "second-wave" feminist views within most of Loy's work[5].

Yet it is crucial to note that Loy never identified as a "feminist" poet. She would likely have found such a title too limited in scope. Her literary project was one that wanted to occupy not one genre or message but many. Never fully a feminist nor a Futurist at one given time, she

[5] In her Encyclopaedia Britannica article, "Women's Movement: Political and Social Movement," Elinor Burkett writes that first-wave feminists "of the 19th and early 20th centuries focused on women's legal rights, such as the right to vote" while the second wave movement that "peaked in the 1960s and '70s" was more inclusive of women's various experiences. She enumerates "family, sexuality, and work" as the second wave's main themes. That these themes are found in both The Freewoman and Loy's body of work only further confirms my belief that separating feminist themes and arguments into disparate historical waves only hastens the erasure of otherwise politically charged literary moments.

preferred to use elements of both political and stylistic forms. Occupying a negative space, partially outside of literary history, yet invisibly sown into the very fabric of the Modernist legacy, Loy's gendered identity is complex and multifaceted. By avoiding absolutes, Loy risked self-erasure, but in turn created unique Feminine identities that have yet to be fully understood. This is due to Loy's enigmatic writing style; one whose careful blending of genres offers a complex layering of meanings. So as to better define her various Feminine identities, my thesis will explore Loy's work through a comparative reading of letters, biographical elements, and the little magazines Loy appeared in. Effectively retracing Loy's literary process through the archival documents she left behind, I will underline the key influences that led to her creation of a Negation aesthetic.

1.3. Little Magazines, Feminine Identities, & the Manifesto

In *New Woman Hybridities: Femininity, Feminism and International Consumer Culture*, Ann Heilmann and Margaret Beetham define the periodical press as "a public space to which women could get access, […] a forum for debate, for the sharing of ideas and for an entry into public life" (6). Loy herself took part in such debates within the pages of *The Little Review* (Volume 7, issues 3 and 4), where she and writer John Rodker criticized each other's work, the one matching the other with the same satirical detachment Loy is now known for. Though published debates between writers such as the Loy–Rodker argument were rather common, this nonetheless serves as an interesting jumping point for a deeper analysis of Loy's exchanges with her contemporaries. For Rodker was not the only prominent Modernist to critique Loy's work. She quickly gained the attention of Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot, amongst others, and though their

reviews were not always positive, that Loy was discussed at all amongst what we now know to be the key players in the formation of the Modernist canon is of great importance.

Still, despite countless nods to Loy's influence on the style of some of Modernism's most prominent writers, Loy remains at the periphery of most manuals documenting the history of Modernist literature (if she is mentioned at all). The reasons behind this odd sidelining from the Modernist canon are integral to this thesis. It is my contention that Loy's lack of representation within Modernist anthologies, much like the now discarded progressive feminist views found in such periodicals as *The Freewoman*, are the result of the misogynist tendencies of the modernist institutions that decided what would be printed and what would be promoted[6].

It is with the intent of exploring the various promotional institutions of the modernist era that my first chapter turns its attention to the influential role little magazines played in the creation of the modernist movement as we now understand it. By turning first to the political treatises and reader correspondences found within the feminist periodical *The Freewoman*, I recuperate some of the proto- "second-wave" feminist views that have since been lost to history. This in turn permits me to showcase the politically driven debates held amongst readers, authors, and editors concerning such delicate topics as marriage, childbirth, and the suffragette movement. These debates align with many of the gendered topics Loy would go on to develop and explore in her writing throughout her career. In particular, by calling attention to *The*

[6] Caroline Burke, for one, notes that "Pound was already certain that 'genius' was coded 'masculine,' and seems to have felt that, unlike the sentimental poetesses of the nineteenth century, intelligent modern women like Moore and Loy wrote just like men" ("Getting Spliced" 100). Though Loy would likely not have been offended by this association with masculine genius, this nonetheless only serves to further explain Pound's insistence on labeling and editing Loy's work to better fit his conception of Modernism. That Pound chose to completely extricate the gendered elements of Loy's writing style is explored more at length in my second chapter.

Freewoman founder Dora Marsden's critique of the suffragettes, I am better able to locate the context out of which Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" and, by proxy, her Negation aesthetic arose.

Having scrutinized the progressive ideologies expressed within the periodical press and the ways such views informed and were mirrored by Loy's work, I will use my second chapter to gain a better grasp of the multifaceted nature of the Feminine identities found in her poetry. By focusing first on the question of what it means to be a "woman writer," I continue the debate begun by numerous feminist critics on how gendered labels alter the perception of an artist's work. To demonstrate Loy's clever re-appropriation of the "woman writer" label, this chapter turns to the fictionalized autobiographical elements found within her poetry. Focusing on Loy's poem, "The Effectual Marriage," I call attention to Loy's incorporation of a fictional self within her work, a self-satire that grants her a unique vantage point of the gender inequality of her era. In parallel to this, I scrutinize Pound's attempts at editing the poem, leading to a further questioning of the canonizing process and Loy's negative space within the Modernist canon.

My third and final chapter focuses on Loy's "Feminist Manifesto," a complex and often misunderstood text, and the key role it played in the formation of her Negation aesthetics. At times political, at others almost distastefully satirical, Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" not only establishes the themes her work would revisit throughout her career, it serves as a prime example of Loy's insistence on occupying a non-binary, negative space. Often read as a satirical translation of Marinetti's "The Founding and the Manifesto of Futurism" (1909), scholars note the ease with which "Feminist Manifesto" satirizes the futurists' brutality in her dubious demand for "the unconditional surgical destruction of [women's] virginity" (Loy 155). However, few have remarked on Loy's mixed feelings towards early 20th century feminism, despite the central influence of this dissatisfaction on her manifesto's agenda. An analysis of Valentine de Saint-

Point's "Manifesto of the Futurist Woman" is therefore crucial to a better understanding of the feminist climate at the time of the manifesto's composition. By contrasting both Marinetti and de Saint-Point's manifesto with Loy's, this chapter builds to a deeper understanding of the irony in being both a Futurist and a feminist of sorts.

Having explored the medium through which Loy's work came into being (the little magazines), the impact of the publishing and editing institutions on Loy's gradual erasure, and Loy's identification with a negative space between various modernist movements, my thesis concludes on an open-ended questioning of Loy's continued importance in contemporary feminist and modernist academia. Through this endeavour, I hope to demonstrate the importance of the digital and printed archive in any attempt at seeking out forgotten ideologies and political stances. For as Loy's work has shown in its continued avoidance of proper classification, much of our literary history remains to be explored. It is through the promotion of the discarded voices of this literary past that we may evaluate what has truly changed in our understanding of the world and what has remained the same.

2. Feminist Correspondences: Loy's Feminine Identity & *The Freewoman*

Mina Loy's poetry has garnered increasing attention from Women's Studies scholars due to what is now perceived as its progressive feminist undertones. However, in celebrating Loy's interventions, it is important to remain aware of the difficult processes such avant-garde representations of womanhood went through in order to be acknowledged in otherwise male dominated institutions[7]. Though the early twentieth century saw an important shift in women's financial and political rights due to the rise of the suffragette movement, the misogynist tracts and literary works found in newspapers and periodicals of the time demonstrate the persistent presence of derogatory views on early feminist formations and the organizations that supported them. These disparaging viewpoints may in part be explained by what Rita Felski describes as "the establishment of increasingly rigid boundaries between private and public selves" during the nineteenth century, limits and restrictions that "solidified [gender differences] into apparently

[7] By "male dominated institutions," I mean the various modernist institutions that dictated which poets were worthy of praise and publication and which had to be discarded. A description of these institutions can be found in Lawrence Rainey's *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Cultures*. Rainey speaks of the shift that began during the decade of 1900-1910, one that led to the "polarization between 'high' and 'low' literature" (2). He equally describes the commodification of literary texts, indicating the rise of "patron-investors" (39) and the "unprecedented use of two institutions [:] the little review and the limited edition" (39). As the new forms of artistic promotion, Rainey hints at the interconnected nature of these institutions run principally by men. Of particular interest is Rainey's third chapter, "The Price of Modernism: Publishing *The Waste Land*," in which he describes Pound's key role in the editing and promotion of Eliot's poem and in turn the modernist canon as a whole. Though Rainey is careful to avoid describing these promotional and publishing institutions as male-centric, his text's focus on Pound, Marinetti, Joyce, and Eliot show a clear advancement of masculine ideologies over the eclipsed feminine. This is made most evident in his much shorter analysis of H.D. in which he states that "what still remains to be established, though, is whether she was a great poet" (148), a doubt he does not place on her masculine contemporaries.

natural and immutable traits" (18). These conditions only helped encourage the chauvinistic diatribes that were equally expressed by the modernist institutions that played a key role in the printing and marketing of authors like Loy. Due to the patrilineal, self-promoting nature of these institutions, few women poets managed to stay in the spotlight for long. Still, poets such as Loy, as well as editors like Dora Marsden, managed to thwart such self-replicating chauvinism through a clever infiltration of the very institutions that attempted to silence them[8].

In "Recovering Feminist Criticism: Modern Women Writers and Feminist Periodical Studies," Barbara Green draws the reader's attention to the voluminous pile of women writers who have been erased through the exclusionary selection process that the building of a Modernist canon requires. However, she proposes, it is possible, through the careful deciphering of feminist periodicals, to recover some of the underrepresented women writers of the early 20th century (Green 54). In this way, studying feminist magazines such as Dora Marsden and Mary Gawthorpe's *The Freewoman* as both literary institutions and anthologies reveals an offshoot of what we now brand the Modernist canon. This scion, composed of forgotten women writers (what Green calls a "woman's modernism"), had an under-appreciated influence on the writers and poets academically recognized as the "literary greats." An example of this can be found in the messy interweaving of Marsden and Pound's voices within the *New Freewoman* and its successor *The Egoist*. As Bruce Clarke notes in *Dora Marsden and Early Modernism: Gender,*

[8] In "Ezra's appropriations," K.K. Ruthven convincingly argues that the editorial shifts between *The Freewoman*, *The New Freewoman*, and *The Egoist* demonstrate a clear example of a "paradigmatic instance of the subordination of women by a male-dominated modernism" (1301). However, Maroula Joannou prefers to view this change as "the logical outcome of Marsden's endemic position-shifting and of her well-known propensity for intellectual transformations and decisive ruptures with established communities and constituencies" (605). Bruce Clarke equally defends Marsden's "editorial will and doctrinal resolve" (*Dora Marsden*, 97), stating that Pound has too often been unjustly painted as the villain in *The Freewoman*'s demise.

Individualism, Science: Pound had an "immediate discursive proximity […] to the *New Freewoman*" (116) and contributed rather regularly, while Marsden "clearly […] participat[ed] in the idiom of imagism" (116). William Carlos Williams equally joined in the active correspondences found within the *New Freewoman*, challenged by Marsden's relentlessly provocative editorial voice. It is my contention that by recovering Marsden's early feminist views as well as the lively debates found within her correspondence section, I will be able to underline *The Freewoman*'s impact on the ongoing search for a broader modernism, while equally calling attention to the thematic similarities between Marsden and Loy's views on feminism.

As Green explains, periodical studies help us "recover not the single woman writer, but the network, the dialogue, the conversation" (58). This recovery of an early twentieth century network of voices is the key to underlining not only the unheard opinions of women on the art and literary works found in modernist magazines, but equally serves to paint a brighter picture of their day-to-day reality and blossoming political views. Under the protective veil of the anonymous correspondences found in little magazines like *The Freewoman*, women explored such issues as marriage, pregnancy, and sexuality. Though these conversations were at times intercut with the disparaging remarks of various male readers[9], these interruptions only served to better strengthen the resolve of those participating in the correspondence section's debates, effectively proving the necessity of such democratic spaces of discourse.

It is with the intent of reviving such feminist exchanges that this chapter links the network of voices found within *The Freewoman* with Loy's oeuvre. By associating the female

[9] This chapter explores the misogynist views of *The Freewoman* contributors A. B., and Edmund B. D'Auvergne, as well as the strong retaliation of the women correspondents in opposition to their texts.

subjectivities introduced by the editors of *The Freewoman* with those explored by Loy's "Feminist Manifesto," this chapter opens an otherwise inexistent dialogue between the feminist theory found in a woman-oriented British periodical and Loy's unorthodox view of womanhood. This in turn introduces a geographic lineage justified by Loy's British origins, all the while questioning her absence from such feminist circles.

I am not the first to mine the archives of *The Freewoman* for plausible connections with modernist poets. In "Scientism and Spirituality in The Freewoman and The Egoist," Bruce Clarke underlines William Carlos Williams' relationship with *The Freewoman*'s two successors, the *New Woman* and *The Egoist*, as "a crucial element in his early poetic development" (121). He equally draws attention to the "relatively obscure" (121) relation between H.D. and Marsden, remarking upon "H.D.'s probable exposure to the political theology of *The Freewoman*, which began an eleven-month run in 1911 as a spin-off of doctrinal tension within the British women's suffrage movement" (122). Clarke signals this war of ideals as a direct influence of H.D.'s undated short story titled "The Suffragette."

Like H.D., Loy's poetry and (most intriguingly) political prose do not figure in the pages of *The Freewoman*. And yet, the gendered themes explored by both Loy and Marsden illustrate a clear ideological shift often omitted by the traditional modernist narrative. For this reason, a study of how Loy and *The Freewoman*'s contributors portrayed women's everyday experiences is paramount to the recovery of a "woman's modernism." By comparing the feminine and masculine views of marriage expressed within *The Freewoman*'s correspondence column with Loy's poem "Virgins Plus Curtains Minus Dots," I will draw attention to Loy's subtle yet effective critique of the misogynist views of her era. Never a person of half-measures, Loy

utilizes a strong satirical voice to undermine the Victorian ideals normalized even within Marsden's feminist periodical.

Finally, this chapter will explore the increasing debates that arose within *The Freewoman* on the place of childbearing within the marital institution. Though this periodical should have been a haven for the discontent expressed by mothers and wives wanting to question their reproductive role within society, *The Freewoman* equally published male-written articles on the subject. Studying the result of placing such contradicting views of motherhood in an otherwise feminist periodical will permit us to delve into the alternative arguments Loy's "Parturition" adds to this debate. This concluding section, a natural progression from the first's contrast of Loy and Marsden's feminism and the second's exploration of marriage, demonstrates Loy's effective retooling of feminine archetypes that were once so derogatory into an empowering new Feminine ideal.

2.1. Freewomen, Bondwomen, & the Inadequate Feminist

In his introduction to the second volume of *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines* Andrew Thacker notes that "it is almost universally acknowledged that modernism in America took root first in periodical publication, and that without [such] magazines […], the contours of American modernism, and indeed also the transnational character of modernism, would not be as we know it" (1). Though Thacker does mention the participation of women within literary publications as editors and writers, little focus is placed on the political shifts caused by such a female presence. There is, however, a considerable amount of attention given to the role little magazines like *Others* played in encouraging the controversial *vers libre* poetry, as well as the avant-garde reputation the presence of Loy's work garnered for

Rogue magazine. Yet, this passing mention of Loy takes more of an economic turn. Thacker implies that Loy's avant-garde nature increased *Rogue*'s popularity, therefore its revenue. This is evidently an important fact to remark upon, but this should not be the only concern of one studying the historical impact of periodicals. Instead, I would venture that the social statement such a small-time magazine as *Rogue* made by encouraging atypical poets like Loy is of equal, if not bigger, importance. For by promoting artistic voices whose views might shock their readers, *Rogue* took a financial risk that helped broaden the formation of progressive or dissenting thinkers.

Loy's "clinical frankness" apparently "horrified [the] gentry and drove […] critics into furious despair" (Longworth 476), but this shock value only served to increase Loy's commercialization by magazines such as *Rogue*. Whether it was the erotic undertones of "Songs to Joannes," the discomforting portrayal of marriage in "Virgins Plus Curtains Minus Dots," or the first female perspective of pregnancy in "Parturition," the name "Mina Loy" quickly became a brand of sorts for the unusual, the unexpected, and the shocking. By the time she was labeled the official poster girl for the "modern woman" by the *New York Evening Sun* (Conover xvi), she had gained the attention of none-other than Ezra Pound, the canonized father of modernism.

The response Loy's work received was not always positive however. For a patriarchal society that was already struggling with women's demand for the right to vote, Loy was an increasingly uncomfortable presence for readers wanting to enjoy the otherwise dominant male literary "geniuses." Though the promotion of Loy's poetry would not be offensive today, at the time of its publication editors of other periodicals such as Harriet Monroe's *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse,* "hesitated over and indeed refused what she felt were overly erotic poems" (Carr 56). That *Camera Work*, *Rogue*, *The Trend*, *Others*, and *The Dial* chose to include Loy's work

despite its reputation as "swill poetry" (Burke 6), goes far to demonstrate the time's increasing respect for women writers. Nonetheless, the progress was slow and much of the criticism came from within the modernist movement itself.

In 1919, writer and lifelong friend of T. S. Eliot, Conrad Aiken, published *Scepticisms: Notes on Contemporary Poetry* in which he heavily criticized the modernists found within *Others: An Anthology of the New Verse* (published two years previous). Within *Scepticisms* Aiken insists that the reader can

> pass lightly over the studiously cerebral obscurantism of Marianne Moore, the tentacular quiverings of Mina Loy, the prattling iterations of Alfred Kreymborg, the delicate but amorphous self-consciousness of Jeanne d'Orge, Helen Hoyt, and Orrick Johns" (162)

Safe for Kreymborg and Johns, Aiken's critique is squarely aimed at the women writers found within Kreymborg's anthology. For though the anthology included prominent pieces by Walter Conrad Arensburg, Maxwell Bodenheim, Skipwith Cannéll, T. S. Eliot, David O'neil, John Rodker, Robert Alden Sanborn, Carl Sandburg, Wallace Stevens, and William Carlos Williams, Aiken's negative review singles out all but one of the women writers found within the anthology—he chooses to avoid mentioning Mary Carolyn Davies altogether. In fact, Aiken keeps his most positive praise for Eliot and Stevens, suggesting that the reader should "pause with admiration and delight" before their works and disregard the anthology's other poets. Equally of interest is *Scepticisms*' lack of any Moore and Loy quotes. They are likewise missing from Aiken's adequately titled "selective bibliography." Yet, despite Aiken's decision to avoid citing them altogether, they are criticized not once but twice within his piece and are found within his index. Thus, though Aiken avoided offering any actual textual examples for his

disparaging remarks, it was important for him that readers could find his critique of them as "cerebral obscurantism[s]" (162), "tentacular quiverings" (162), and "gelatinous erogenous quiverings" (241).

Nonetheless, it is important to note that Aiken's negative assessment of Loy and the other women writers of *Others* ironically demonstrates the very existence of a shift towards a more inclusive literary moment. For though Aiken seemed to fear Loy's "quiverings" and its "infect[ion]" (241) of language itself, though Monroe was repulsed by her "overly erotic poems" (Carr 56), Loy's work continued to be published within various periodicals all the way into the late 1940s. In fact, these negative reviews likely added to her reputation as an avant-garde poet. Having once been seen by critics as "entangled in sensibility" due to their "romantic and sentimental" nature (Clark 2), women poets such as Loy were now seen as overtly sexual and anti-emotional. What was once perceived as vapid feminine emotion had thus become a radical new form of Feminine expression, an avant-garde poetics that both dismayed and intrigued the public. In turn, the critical attention Loy drew procured cultural and commercial capital for the editors that published her. Of equal interest are the inevitable political discourses her poetry provoked amongst her readership. However, Loy's portrayal of new Feminine subjects was not developed in a vacuum. *The Freewoman*, a self-titled "weekly feminist review," began its circulation three years prior to Loy's first publications and expressed similar views to the ones that Loy would eventually inscribe in her "Feminist Manifesto."

Founded by Dora Marsden, an English anarcho-feminist and suffragette, and co-editor Mary Gawthorpe, *The Freewoman* was a radical periodical "that moved beyond the vote to address issues such as prostitution, homosexuality, and other matters relating to class and gender" (modjourn.org). It was within the pages of its first issue that Marsden and Gawthorpe

expressed their progressive feminist views through an article they titled "Bondwomen." The text in question describes a clear separation of women into two categories: the freewomen and the bondwomen— "women who are not separate spiritual entities—who are not individuals" (Marsden and Gawthorpe 1). The similarity between such a dichotomy and Loy's distinction between the "relative impersonality" of women not yet ready to start a proper feminist revolution and what she sees as the true "Feminine" women ("Feminist Manifesto" 154) is evident. The difference, however, lies in how both perform their social critique. "Bondwomen" promotes revolutionary ideals in its demand for woman to "take her place as a master" (Marsden and Gawthorpe 2). A struggle for an independence of the mind, this revolution "is born in the individual soul, and […] no outer force can either give it or take it away" (2). The shift from bondwoman to freewoman therefore occurs as a personal awakening, one that struggles to maintain an opposition to the "rôle of complacent self-sacrifice" (2). There is evident revolutionary potential in such a mental shift and an endeavour such as this should not be diminished lightly, especially when one considers the oppressive system from within which these views were developed. Nevertheless, the means through which Loy seeks her sexual revolution proves to be far more assertive than the "Bondwomen" 's demand for a mental shift.

Where "Bondwomen" 's tone is discursive, lending itself to an open-debate type of exchange, Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" is forceful, imposing itself as the one true solution as a manifesto is wont to do. A first example of this insistent tone can be found in Loy's statement that reform can only truly be performed through "Absolute Demolition" ("Feminist Manifesto" 153). This destructive vocabulary, a clear Futurist outgrowth, retools the Italian movement's violent aesthetics into a language that satirizes the brutality of the manifesto genre while equally using this very aggressive style to its advantage. Where "Bondwomen" encourages readers to

"apprais[e] their own worth" and "se[t] up their own standards" (2), Loy imposes her will through a reclaiming of the Futurists' misogynist vocabulary. Where "Bondwomen" speaks of the "Comforter" and "Comforted" (2), Loy speaks of the "parasite" and the "exploited" (154). Her unconventional portrayal of women as parasites permits a satirical mirroring of the Futurist dialectic. The unusual bold and underline of the font dramatizes the limited options of early twentieth century women to "Parasitism," "Prostitution" or "Negation" (154). Unlike the "Bondwomen" article, whose educated reasoning is avant-gardist though more suggestive than fully affirmative, "Feminist Manifesto" is commanding as only manifestos can be. As her argument concludes, one can almost hear "the Manifesto of Futurism" 's line, "You raise objections? …Stop! Stop! We know them… We've understood!" (Marinetti 6). Loy's argument is firm, militantly decisive, and offers no alternatives, while Marsden and Gawthorpe's text opens a debate, one that is encouraged by the correspondence section of the following issue. Though Loy's manifesto is debatably more progressive in nature, the questions raised by *The Freewoman* article demonstrate a feminist train of thought that likely influenced Loy's own explorations of the topic.

Loy states at the start of her "Feminist Manifesto:" "the feminist movement as at present instituted is inadequate" (153). Though it is more likely that Loy was attacking the suffragettes, as is most evident in the line, "Professional & commercial careers are opening up for you—Is that all you want?" (153), it is evident that she would have been equally disappointed in the limitations of solely continuing a debate that had, in her opinion, offered little results. Still, even Loy seemed to have been uncertain of her stance, the manifesto having remained unpublished until its rediscovery in 1982. This uncertainty had likely less to do with her feminist stance than her belief that women of her era weren't ready for the radical change needed to demolish the

boundaries imposed on women's day-to-day reality. As she wrote to Mabel Dodge, "I feel rather hopeless of devotion to the Woman-cause—Slaves will believe that chains are protectors" (Conover "Notes" 216). But though she may have refrained from writing further feminist tracts, the trace of her burgeoning views is apparent in much of her early poetry.

Chief amongst them, one of her first poems—an untitled piece from 1914 at times subtitled as "There is No Life or Death"—introduces Loy's discomfort with absolutes:

> There is no Life or Death,
>
> Only activity
>
> And in the absolute
>
> Is no declivity. (1-4)

The Merriam-Webster defines "declivity" as a "downward inclination," "a descending slope" (merriam-webster.com). Loy first introduces life's utmost absolutes, the very nature of living our Lives with a capital L, and the sudden brutality of its end in Death. She then immediately diminishes these traditional themes by stating that they are unimportant when contrasted with the "activity" of the day-to-day, almost as though the banal act of being active has negated the excitement of "Life" and the fear of "Death." She then goes on to state that even in these absolutes, these moments of our creation and destruction, there is no "descending slope," no diminishing progress to a definitive end. This adds a positive turn to the very act of living in that she insists on turning away from the overly dramatized nature of death, but it equally serves as a means of illustrating that if the fatal act of Death itself is of no serious worry, then most absolutes should equally be questioned. In this way, Loy demonstrates with ease the richness of metaphor in very few lines. This mastery of the written word's multiplicity of meanings would continue to seep deep into the very fabric of her writing. "Moreover, the Moon — — —,"

undated but likely written between 1942 and 1949, uses a similarly strong metaphorical voice to grant death new meaning. Describing the moon, central muse to the piece, as a "Silver, circular corpse," Loy thwarts this morbid descriptor by adding that it is the diseased nature of this very corpse which "infects us with unendurable ease" (7,9). What begins as a rotting infectiousness becomes a source of comfort, but one that is unbearable.

Both "There is No Life or Death" and "Moreover, the Moon — — —" use of metaphors serve as excellent examples of Loy's Negation aesthetic, for it is in such instances that we gain a glimpse at the negative space hidden behind her word choices. Whether it is "There is No Life or Death" 's morbid implication that day to day "activity" may in fact hold no meaning if removed from the larger themes of Life and Death, or "Moreover, the Moon — — —" 's hinting that it may be human nature to seek perpetual means of stepping outside of the stagnant nature of "unendurable ease," Loy makes us question the immaterial nature of our internalized perceptions of the world. This technique is used in various ways throughout the body of her work. As a prime example: Loy's obsession with constantly remaining active, of effectively pushing for a constant forwards motion as opposed to worrying about the encroaching conclusion, is central to "Feminist Manifesto" 's message. By demanding a new form of feminism, one ready for "Absolute Demolition" (153), she not only mirrors the violence of the Futurist movement that influenced this manifesto, but also uses it as a central theme that metaphorically moves forward with brutal insistence, leading to her demand for the demolition of what she sees as "the first illusion [:] the division of women into two classes the mistress, & the mother" (154). Introducing the themes of "parasitism," "prostitution" and "negation," the mistress/mother dichotomy offers little possibility for self-identification, as it insists on a parasitic or effacing dynamic with the male counterpart. However, by demanding a demolition of such categories, Loy proposes that the

reader recreate herself through a yet unknown alternative, one that exists in the negative space occupied between the mistress/ mother poles.

Closer to the separatist feminist ideals of the 1970s Loy's proposed negative space demands a rethinking of woman apart from man, self-created and self-sufficient. In her own words: "Leave off looking to men to find out what you are not—seek within yourselves to find out what you are" (154). Avoiding the death knell of a man-based, imposed sense of self, one that can but limit woman to being the negative of his positive, Loy embraces the neutral and makes it her own, therefore avoiding the limitative qualities of the polar categories. As opposed to Marsden and Gawthorpe's suggestion that women should "take [their] place as a master," (2) a proposition Loy would have likely seen as an unproductive response to a pre-established masculine authority, Loy demands that one should "make" as opposed to "take" such a position.

2.2. Divorce Minus Sexual Relations Equals Impracticable

In "A Definition of Marriage" published in the first issue of *The Freewoman*, Edmund B. d'Auvergne writes: "There are three subjects on which very few English people can be trusted to speak sanely—marriage, Shakespeare, and the British constitution" (5). He goes on to argue that the malaise caused by discussing marriage revolves around the issue of "sex morality" (5) or, as he later develops, the double bind of illegitimate children and the growing fear of a decreasing birth rate. What he does not touch upon is shockingly evident today, but would have been slightly less so at the time of its writing: no regard is placed on the actual views of women on the issues of marriage and childbirth. Even within the context of *The Freewoman*, a magazine aimed at women, and what's more feminist women, men such as d'Auvergne felt it was their duty to be the source of true world knowledge. However, as is immediately evident from the response of

correspondent I. D. Pearce in *The Freewoman*'s following issue, the number of women interested in opposing the old-fashioned claim that marriage was an excuse for breeding soldiers like cattle was increasing exponentially. As she eloquently states: "I for one must vigorously protest against his scheme for reducing the legalized marriage to the level of a mere State-licensed human incubating concern" (Pearce 32).

D'Auvergne and Pearce's debate (which would continue through to the following four issues) demonstrates a clear, though uncomfortable, disagreement between traditionalists and feminists on both the topic of marriage and motherhood. However, despite Pearce's articulate arguments and evident investment in the feminist cause, she fails to bring forth the revolutionary stance needed to break free from the condescension of d'Auvergne's diatribes. Much like the ineffectual proposal of a personal shift offered by "Bondwomen," Pearce's stances remain trapped in a masculine dominated argument. On the other hand, the social critique found in Loy's poem "Virgin Plus Curtains Minus Dots" proves itself to showcase a much more effective approach. The eloquence of her word choice, the careful selection of contrasting images to symbolize male and female presence, as well as the evident critique of gender norms hidden tastefully below a mysterious tone all her own, all serve to strengthen her arguments.

Printed next to a page showcasing a fashion sketch promoting ladies' fastening garters, as well as two unconnected short jokes, Loy's "Virgin Plus Curtains Minus Dots" may very well have fallen under the radar. One of the two jokes, "In England Now," offers light humour at a time when the First World War was still at its peak:

> "We have such good news from the
>
> front!"
>
> "What, is Charles safe?"

"Yes, safely wounded." (11)

The joke is not made to be taken too seriously and serves more as a form of entertainment to keep the reader laughing at a difficult time. Similarly, the fashion sketch, drawn by Clara Tice and titled "Virgin Minus Verse," illustrates a virgin in lingerie, a less discrete visual cue for the erotic desires expressed in secret by the virgins of Loy's poem. With the time that separates us from this 1915 edition of *Rogue*, it is difficult to know how these submissions—far different in tone and complexity to Loy's satirical social critique—affected Loy's reception. However, one can imagine that the joke would have brought out Loy's satirical humour while undermining the seriousness of Loy's critique of gender dynamics. Similarly, the fashion sketch would likely have underlined Loy's gendered "feminine" voice as opposed to her revolutionary "Feminine" poetics. Nonetheless, one could equally argue that "Virgin Plus Curtains Minus Dots" demonstrated a social critique that surpassed such limitations.

Evidently influenced by her British upbringing, therefore rooted within the same context as d'Auvergne's more traditionalist views on marriage, "Virgin Plus Curtains Minus Dots" critiques a bourgeois understanding of marital commitment. The poem's subtitle, "*Latin Borghese*," refers both to the members of a noble Italian family whose influence held sway in the fields of art and politics, and the bourgeois/middle class. Brought up by a mother who "shared the widespread Victorian belief that parents should repress young children for their own good" (Burke 17), Loy had an equal distrust of both Victorian sensibilities and the very notion of sentimentality. "Virgins Plus Curtains Minus Dots" is therefore a critique of both the dogmatic nature of the Victorian ideals of marriage and the misogynistic views offered by such essayists as d'Auvergne.

Central to "A Definition of Marriage", is d'Auvergne's statement: "we must realize that marriage is becoming a mere trade for idle and unenterprising women" (6). Loy may or may not have read this preposterous view, but she, like many other women of her time, would have been exposed to similar chauvinistic views on a regular basis. By contrasting such statements to Loy's "Virgins Plus Curtains Minus Dots," it is my belief that we gain a much stronger understanding of Loy's political aims. Unlike the unhelpful contrast between Loy's poem and the short jokes offered by *Rogue*, aligning her political intent with those expressed in *The Freewoman* facilitates an understanding of the historical context within which her portrayal of gender inequality functioned.

Using such lines as "Virgins without dots* / Stare beyond probability" ("Virgins" 5-6), Loy demonstrates the political potential of the negative spaces occupied by broken lines in a piece of poetry. Granting the possibility of multiple interpretations, Loy's poetics both intrigue and frustrate. Read in a linear fashion, Loy insists that virgins or ineligible women without a proper dowry have little chance at finding a proper mate, making d'Auvergne's view that such women are unenterprising unfounded and insensitive. On the other hand, a variant reading approach connecting "virgins" with "stare," and "without dots*" with "beyond probability," serves to place an additional emphasis on the tragedy of such a woman's life. Unable to do more than stare in the silence of the pauses found within the poems empty spaces, the virgins quickly discover that the financial and personal possibilities of a dowry lie "beyond probability," far out of reach.

In one of her numerous responses to d'Auvergne, Pearce states that "it is of more real value to the future of the human race as things are that women should be giving birth to new thoughts, new aspirations, and new ideals" (32). However, Pearce herself seems incapable of

bringing in any truly new ideas. This is not to say that one should demean the discourses encouraged by Pearce's four-issue long response to d'Auvergne's overconfident arguments. Neither should one ignore the feminist advances brought on by such early contestations of male privilege. My interest lies more in drawing attention to the difference between the diplomatic nature of Pearce's arguments and the performative nature of Loy's satire of male hotheadedness. Loy does not seek to argue a point that men such as d'Auvergne have countered time and time again; instead she paints a bitterly comedic portrayal of the flâneur male who is blissfully unaware of his privilege:

> Their hats are not ours
> We take a walk
> They are going somewhere
> And they may look everywhere
> Men's eyes look into things
> Our eyes look out ("Virgins" 8-13)

The negative spaces serve once more to communicate a separate and contrasting group of ideas. The seemingly humorous nature of "Their hats are not ours" (8), calls attention to the ludicrous notion of material possessions and physical liberties. The abruptness of the statement serves to indicate the supposed logic of men owning such items as hats and the status it grants them, while a woman attempting to gain such a privilege would be perceived as ridiculous.

A similar double meaning is found in the line "They are going somewhere" (10). Not only do men have the liberty of moving freely between public spaces, this liberty grants them infinite possibilities in life, while women simply "take a walk" (9), limited in their mobility but also in their ability to move up in life. The following lines, 12 and 13, speak to the captivity of

women, their inability to do more than "look out" (13) from behind the curtains of their protected private spaces, contrasted with the male ability to appraise all that is in their purview. Within such a Victorian lifestyle, it is only in the hopes offered by the marital institution that women may gain a semblance of freedom, though without a proper dowry even this they cannot hope to gain with ease.

Though this poem could be seen as originating in a Victorian understanding of the world, one not relevant to the modernist context, this is not the case. For as the mysterious correspondent A. B.'s piece, "The Failure of Marriage," serves to demonstrate, even the pro women's rights essayists found within *The Freewoman* published a problematic understanding of women's realities. The first half of his stance seems positive: "a wife is neither a concubine, nor a housekeeper and nurse, nor an unusually costly and ornamental article of furniture; she is essentially a friend" (386). The logic of such an argument is straightforward, but even within such a position, we find a troubling issue: as a contributor to a feminist magazine, who is A. B. addressing? If the female feminist public is the focus, reading that they are not a "costly and ornamental article of furniture" seems to hint at a mocking, condescending tone, one that states the obvious to demean. If instead the feminist males or casual male readers are the concerned addressees, this detailed description of what women are not only helps to circulate stereotypes that remain prevalent to this day.

Nevertheless, this stance would not seem that far removed from similar stances had A. B. not followed with this troubling affirmation: "Divorce is impracticable" (386). The word "impracticable" goes to show the technical, emotionless view of marriage A. B. shares with d'Auvergne, but the troubling message goes one step further by stating that "divorce means having to maintain a woman without the *quid pro quo* of sexual relations with her" (386). The

"impracticable" nature of divorce is therefore resumed not to the emotional tolls or financial losses incurred by a bad divorce, but by the unenviable task of owing money to a woman with whom the male in question would no longer be able to fornicate.

A. B.'s logical argument that women are not concubines and should not be objectified is nullified by his belief that this friendship between man and woman is not viable once the question of personal funds and sexual favours are removed. The argument, though hidden behind a progressive mask, mirrors d'Auvergne's belief that women manipulate the marital institutions for financial gain. A. B.'s conclusion, that "the whole difficulty is the narrowness of the area of choice, and anything that can be done to widen it is to be welcomed" (387), is equally problematic in its implication that the solution remains with the men and that women must simply line up and wait to be chosen. Loy illustrates this unpleasant reality within "Virgins Plus Curtains Minus Dots" with three simple words: "Virgins for sale" (33). Bluntly stating the financial value of eligible women, Loy effectively critiques the hypocrisy of the supposed pro women discourses offered by men such as A. B. and d'Auvergne.

However, the virgins found within Loy's poem should not be seen simply as captives or victims. Her portrayal of virginity remains multifaceted, effectively avoiding the flat female roles usually offered by her male contemporaries. There is an evident, though undermined, desire expressed by the poem's virgins. As she writes:

> A great deal of ourselves
> We offer to the mirror
> Something less to the confessional (14-6)

Much of the exterior presentation the poem's collective "we" shows to the world must be groomed and fine-tuned so as to please a possible suitor, however, to the confessional they offer

less, preferring to keep their private desires to themselves. Though a meagre attempt, this is a means for the protagonists to keep a part of themselves that cannot be sold. Whispering and giggling about "the man" (26) and "transparent nightdresses made all of lace" (22), the women hope to quench a desire that is both sexual and envious for "flesh [that] Wanders at will" (51-2). The virgin's desire therefore becomes complicated by being both for the sexual pleasures promised through marriage and the freedom they can only glimpse at through parted curtains.

The power of Loy's poem remains in the unspoken words between the broken lines. The poem's speaker addresses a "we" that is presumed to be a female community of forward thinkers opposed to the gender inequalities Loy discusses with the cold detachment she is famous for. However, the titular virgins at the core of the poem's message seem mostly voiceless safe for the instances where they "may whisper" (21), where they "may squeak" (23). Their voices and reactions are hypothetical, hidden behind pulled curtains. This is where they gain their metaphorical strength. For until the very poem's conclusion, Loy does not allow her virgins to be objectified. Always on the periphery of the words, occupying the voids between words, their desires remain hypothetical, hidden to the reader, therefore always their own.

2.3. Motherhood & the Infinitely Unfolding

Loy's characterization of the reality of unwedded women was revolutionary in its own right. "Virgins Plus Curtains Minus Dots" uses a satirical tone to dismantle Victorian values while equally focusing in on the gender equalities of her own era. Her poem "Parturition" performs a similar feat in its intimate portrayal of the stages of labor. Its first appearance, within the pages of *The Trend* of October 1914, was camouflaged amongst short stories and war related articles. Unlike the *Rogue* whose reputation as a "coterie magazine […] gave voice to the

cultural tastes and artistic ideals of the 'esthetes, satirists, dandies, poets [and] dilettanti'" (Longworth 467-68), *The Trend* was less interested in the experimental efforts of its writers and focused more on what Victoria Kingham calls "a mixture of the unexpected" (419). The differences in focus and advertising strategies found within both magazines is most apparent in their contrasting self-promotion.

The first page of the March 1915 edition of *Rogue* describes itself as "something that the world has been waiting for. Its birth is under the most auspicious influences" (3). By contrast the advertising section found in the October 1914 edition of *The Trend* puts forwards its principal interest in "War and Business" as well as "Fiction of Timely Import" (iii). These varying approaches would have played an important role in a readers' perception of Loy's work. As Longworth notes, *The Trend* "had brought her rapid notoriety for its articulation of the physical and psychological experience of childbirth, embodied on the page through irregular lines and evocative typographics" (475), while *Rogue*, "hardly troubled conservative sensibilities" (481). The reason behind the rather different reception of Loy's two poems may reside in the novelty of "Parturition" 's topic, but it may just as equally stem from the nature of both of the little magazines' self-promotion and their positioning of their writers' texts.

As my previous section has demonstrated, *Rogue* chose to contrast Loy's work with the humour of simple jokes and the nonintrusive nature of a fashion sketch. *The Trend*, instead, chose to place Loy's "Parturition" between R. M. McCurdy's short story "The Academy of Courtship" and Louis Sherwin's war-relevant political piece, "The German Side of It." While "Virgins Plus Curtains Minus Dots" might have gained new meaning in its being contrasted with Clara Tice's sketch "Virgin Minus Verse," the added depth remains a humorous or sexually provocative one. *The Trend*, by contrast, having established itself as being an "open forum for

the untrammelled discussion of alt sides of current questions" (*The Trend* Vol. 8, No.1, 95), offers a decidedly more serious platform to Loy's message. As a studious but silent observer of historical events as they occur, *The Trend*'s editorial staff did not simply choose submissions based on shock value, but instead promoted contrasting value systems that could then be studied and debated. In turn, submissions such as Loy's gained the benefit of a serious consideration by *The Trend*'s readership who, it can be presumed, expected this inclusion of alternative views as opposed to the less meaningful impact of shock value. Therefore, Loy's "irregular lines and evocative typographics" (Longworth 475) would have been more impactful to a *The Trend* reader than it would have been to those picking up *Rogue*'s 1915 edition.

However, it is important to note that *The Trend* "has almost vanished from bibliographic, archival, and critical records. It may have been little known even at the time" (Kingham 416). Therefore, though *The Trend* undoubtedly assisted in Loy's promotion, the critical response at the time might have been limited. While "Songs to Joannes" 's famous line, "Pig Cupid his rosy snout / Rooting erotic garbage" (3-4) elicited a strong (though mostly pejorative) response, the erotic connotations found in such lines as "Parturition" 's "foam on the stretched muscles of a mouth", "climax in sensibility", and "When pain surpassing itself / Becomes Exotic" (57, 59, 60-61) did not elicit as strong a reaction. Whether this is due to *The Trend*'s smaller readership or to the difference in thematic is not easily discernible. However, the female perspective "Parturition" offers of a woman's body and the birthing process cannot be ignored.

"Parturition" 's principal strength comes from its paring of motherhood with divinity. Loy's comparison of women to an all-powerful "birthing" god begins in "Parturition" 's very first line. The poetic "I" is immediately presented as a universal female figure as she establishes this "I" as "the center / Of a circle of pain / Exceeding its boundaries in every direction" (1-3). In

this way, Loy establishes her connection and understanding of female experience, introducing pain as a common ground all mothering creatures can relate to. As opposed to d'Auvergne's promotion of a divisive argument between the "unmarried hussies who have children" and the "respectable married people" that might not be able to have children (5), Loy provides a constructive portrayal of motherhood, one that embodies an "infinite Maternity" (100), one that is "Indivisible" (101) from the all-encompassing "was—is—ever—shall—be / Of cosmic reproductivity" (105-6).

However, as always, Loy is her worst critic. In a letter to Carl Val Vechten, she writes: "I am glad to introduce my sex to the inner meaning of childbirth. The last illusion about my poor mis-created sex is gone. I am sad" (Conover 176-177). By "last illusion" she was likely referring to the "pet illusions" Loy felt women had to break free from as explored in her unpublished "Feminist Manifesto." Having first refuted the need for "division of women into two classes the mistress, & the mother" (154) and the supposed "impurity of sex" (156), the final illusion Loy seeks to undermine through "Parturition" 's poetic "I" is the masculine understanding of what it means to give birth. By writing such lines as "The irresponsibility of the male / Leaves woman her superior Inferiority" (38-9), Loy layers her argument into both a critique of the irresponsible nature of the male lover and the supposed superiority of the male protector. While both d'Auvergne and Pearce debate the importance of motherhood on a reproductive (d'Auvergne) and educative (Pearce) level, Loy instead plays with the word "irresponsibility" to draw attention to the superior responsibility of women in the childbearing process.

That "Parturition" was oddly placed between McCurdy's "The Academy of Courtship" and Sherwin's "The German Side of It" speaks to *The Trend*'s particular flair for the unexpected, but equally serves to add to Loy's increasing commodification as revolutionary poet. "The

Academy of Courtship," a tale about the unsuspecting seduction of a young man by an ill-intentioned woman, portrays women as hyper-sexualized and manipulative, a proper mirror to d'Auvergne's belief that women are hunting for husbands solely for financial gain. Contrasted with both this piece and Sherwin's uncomfortable partisan take on the German perspective during the early phase of the First World War, Loy's text might have been perceived as dangerously seductive by *The Trend* readers. Evidently, such an interpretation would have been entirely contrary to Loy's intended empowering portrayal of women.

As contemporary readers whose understanding of Loy is framed by little else than Loy's other poems and the adequate periodization offered by Conover, the malaise created by glossing over this poem after having read a short story about a manipulative seductress is lost to us. It is however important to keep this in mind if we are to understand how such a positioning within a larger periodical, such as the one hundred and forty-four pages of *The Trend*, may have served to efface the political potential of Loy's poem. For as mentioned earlier, Kingham implies that *The Trend* may have been ignored altogether, meaning that the productive exchanges offered by such pro-feminist contexts as the one found in *The Freewoman* would have been inaccessible to "Parturition."

The presentation offered by *The Trend*'s introduction of the contributors only increased the misconception of what Loy truly stood for. Described as "a painter of international fame […] interested […] in the Italian Futurists, led by F. T. Marinetti," it later goes on to state that "for them [she] renounced the brush and [took] up the pen," describing her poetry as "an outgrowth of the Italian Futurist movement" (Sanborn ii). Though she is referred to as a painter of "international frame," her writing is interpreted as the result of a Futurist influence. In this way, Loy would have come across as a painter with a fleeting interest in poetry, one that was

presumably dependent on Marinetti's reputation. Instead of being perceived as a modernist with a unique style of her own, she is instead interpreted as an "American" rereading of Futurism. However, a perceptive reader of Loy understands that she surpasses such limitative categories.

Loy's work continues, to this day, to be intricately connected with Marinetti and the futurists, as seen by the parallel Lawrence Rainey draws between the title of Loy's "Virgin Plus Curtains Minus Dots" and the sixth principle of Marinetti's "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature." Marinetti's demand for the abolition of punctuation in favour of mathematical and musical symbols becomes the only logical origin for Loy's poetry. Though the inspiration of Loy's work can easily be found amongst the Futurists, it is important to be aware of the erasing effect caused by the labeling of Loy's work as simply an "American" imitation of Futurism. As a supposed "American Futurist," Loy's British and Jewish heritage are all but ignored, making the similarities between Dora Marsden's *The Freewoman* and Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" unnoticeable. Equally, as an "American" imitation of the Italian Futurist movement, Loy loses all semblance of originality. By instead focusing on Loy's ability to claim certain elements of the Futurist mentality while reworking it as a new form of modernism, Loy's work can be better appreciated.

Like "Virgins Plus Curtains Minus Dots," "Parturition" performs a critique of the gender dynamics that should be recognized as a unique trait of Loy's poetic style. Much of what defines both pieces lie in a clever balance of satire and metaphors. The final lines of "Parturition" represent this most adequately:

> I once heard in a church
>
> —Man and woman God made them—
>
> Thank God. (132-134)

Having used very little punctuation throughout the piece, it is easy to miss Loy's discrete paring of "woman" and "God." Without a definitive comma between "Man and woman" and "God made them," one can read "God" as being the creator of man and woman, or "woman God" being the birthing entity of all things. Loy avoids imposing one single understanding, and therefore strengthens both readings. That critics would describe such a poetic style as "an outgrowth of the Italian Futurist movement" (Sanborn ii) goes further to illustrate how few were the readers that truly understood Loy's work. Marinetti's "Manifesto of Futurism," in which "poetry must be conceived as a violent assault launched against unknown forces to reduce them to submission under man" (4) and "contempt for woman" (4) seems far removed from the creationist-like tale found within "Parturition," a narrative that is far from scornful of women's creative force. Instead, Loy's "Parturition" empowers a "woman God" whose very essence seems defined by "unknown forces."

Having little desire to limit her female voices to the traditional roles of "mistress" and "mother" (154), she prefers to blend these representations. Granting the birthing act found within "Parturition" a divine and seductive quality, all the while mixing desire and purity in her representation of virginity, Loy develops new and empowering female roles for her readers. It is for this very reason that Loy's poetry found itself in a difficult position. For though some critics found her work appealing due to its avant-garde flair and retooling of the English language, the greater part of her critical attention labeled her as at best vulgar and at worst inconsequential.

2.4. Loy's Critical Reception & the Anthology Builders

One of Loy's more trenchant reviews, written by an unidentified reporter of the New York Tribune (1920), appears under the jarring war-relevant article titled: "If We Must Fight,

Says Navy Leader, Let's Know the Game." The article in question, titled "Something Else Again: A Book of F.P.A., Mr. Kreymborg's Anthology and a Crop of Spring Poets," mentions Loy only in passing and with very few direct descriptors. In fact, though some of her contemporaries are quoted, not even a line of her poetry is to be seen. This, ironically, helps a great deal in demonstrating the strange recognition Loy's name provided. The article, concerned more with Franklin Pierce Adam's new book *Something Else Again*, pins Loy's name in a small, four-paragraph section subtitled "More of the 'Others'." Reviewing Kreymborg's *Others for 1919—an Anthology of the New Verse*, as numerous critics have done before him, he speaks of a few poets that he deems "not only interesting but even intelligible without a copy of Dr. Brill's tract on psychoanalysis" (9). Loy however does not figure amongst these lucky few that the reviewer finds of interest; instead she is an "other Othe[r]" (9), likely amongst those he defines as "covering their inability to handle verse forms by amorphous arrangements of lines" (9). What is especially troubling is the unnamed critic's dubious conclusion: "He (more often, she) insists on making [verse] worse" (9). The reviewer's critique is evidently related to a displeasure with free-verse, as many negative reviews of Loy were, but what is most troubling is that she figures in this critique at all; It would seem that the mention of her name serves more as a placeholder for what he perceives as the failure of any female attempt at creating revolutionary poetry. For though some "others" may be deemed slightly "interesting," they are more often than not male. The attack becomes gendered and wilfully exclusionary, lacking any quotation from Loy's writing to validate the argument.

In a similar fashion, reviewer Clement Wood of the New York Tribune Review (1918) describes her as suffering "from what Freud might term a harem complex" (4). His take on free-verse is that it might have been the result of a "new movement" sprung from Alfred

Kreymborg's novel *Mushrooms*. A pattern therefore quickly becomes apparent, one in which critics and anthology builders alike felt the need to perpetuate a masculine cultural lineage under which poets such as Loy—whom they found difficult to classify amongst their androcentric canon—might receive a brief mention. Whether deemed a descendent of Marinetti's violent Futurist tirades, Pound's fatherly approval, or Kreymborg's editorial influence, Loy's poetry is hardly ever seen as the natural end-result of a career-long search for a proper portrayal of an independent female voice.

If one thing should be taken from a study of the little magazines in which Loy's poetry featured most prominently, it should be that Loy was often out of place amongst articles on war, misplaced humour, traditionalist takes on gender dynamics, and the more canonical works of her masculine contemporaries. Keeping this in mind helps us understand the critical attacks her work accumulated. It may very well be that Loy's portrayal of new female subjects was far before her time, that a world awaiting news on the violence of war and the growing discontent of the suffragettes was not the proper soil to seed Loy's progressive views.

However, these radical opinions have since gained popular traction amongst Modernist and feminist scholars today. The resurgence of Loy's Feminine subjectivities has reopening dialogues on such topics as the gender wars and the tricky identity of the woman writer. Still, such progressive minded readings are highly dependent on the ways in which works such as Loy's are read. Though the lines that define the Modernist canon continue to be blurred, much of what is defined as modernist remains coded by earlier understandings of the canon. Loy herself tends to be defined by a comparison of her work to that of more recognized contemporaries such as Pound, Eliot, and Marinetti. How Loy felt about such comparisons is hard to recover, but as Conover has stated, Loy may have "wish[ed] to remain unchosen" (xix) from the literary canon

altogether. I, like him, believe that Loy may not have cared about such grand recognitions. It is, after all, through being included amongst such canons that female poets before her have been limited in their scope. Loy may have had sessions of self-doubt throughout her career, may very well have been unaware of the continued debate her work would produce to this day, but in the end, her true success lies in her having held her own in a world that would have preferred to have her silenced. Having outlived both *The Freewoman* and its later iteration *The New Freewoman*, one could venture that it is the very qualities that had shocked her male reviewers that truly helped her work live on.

3. The Woman Writer: "Feminine" Writing, Autobiography, & Self-Negation

The views critics, editors, and readers held on what it meant to be a woman and a writer played a key role in the gradual decline of Loy's notoriety. To understand how such perceptions affected a proper reading of Loy's poetics, we must first define what it meant for an early twentieth century poet to be defined as a "woman writer" or a "new woman." The very existence of a term such as "woman writer" or "new woman"—both titles Loy remains heavily associated with—is problematic, as countless feminist scholars have underlined before me[10]. The conflictual relationship with such descriptors comes down to the at times limiting, at others empowering effects of such words. To use the term "woman writer" can promote a sisterhood of sorts, a literary canon of its own making which can include authors that had once been forgotten. However, to be a "woman writer" can also limit one to being solely a "woman writer," therefore cursing one to remain outside of the vaster category of "writers." It implies that to be a woman who writes is to be, before anything else, a "woman," insisting on a supposed "feminine[11]" writing style, one that apparently lacks the neutrality of the descriptor "writer." In this second chapter, I would like to pursue such topics by reflecting on the links between the female

[10] William B. Warner cites the category of "woman writer" as having "become a kind of filter, encouraging a critical blindness to the contexts, motives, and affiliations of writers who were women" (187). Barbara Green turns instead to the periodical culture of the modernist era and to the presence of the category "woman writer" within its pages. She sees this identifier as being a direct response to the provocation emitted by men that women writers "fail[ed] to produce really first-class work" (55).

[11] Here I speak of a "sentimental" feminine. Not to be confused with Loy's revolutionary "Feminine" as first presented in my introduction and reintroduced in my previous chapter.

identities found within Loy's work and her own connection with the terms "woman writer" and "new woman." For though she herself may have chosen to avoid categorization, it is not possible to fully ignore the influence of early 20th century critics and readers' understanding of the categories/identities "woman writer" and "new woman."

It is not my intention here to determine whether the term "woman writer" has gained a more appropriate definition over time, or whether one should use these words at all. As more knowledgeable researchers have already studied this question,[12] my central concern here lies more in understanding what it might mean (creatively, politically, and on a personal level) for Loy's work to be associated with the "woman writer" identity. Insofar as the ideological connections between *The Freewoman* and Loy's poetry explored in my first chapter have offered new readings of Loy's work, I feel that a broader understanding of what defines a supposed "modern woman writer" will prove equally helpful. For as Barbara Green states, following Toril Moi's own thoughts on the matter:

> […] to speak of oneself as a woman writer is a 'defensive speech act.' When women writers confront the thorny category of 'woman' it is an answer to a provocation, whether that provocation be an assertion on the part of a male critic that her philosophical claims only reflect her femininity […] or whether the provocation be a series of exclusions and removals (Green 53-54)

Following this logic, I would like to go so far as to state that by being identified by newspapers, periodicals, and peers as a "woman writer" ("modern," "futurist," or "new"), the

[12]Toril Moi's "I Am not a Woman Writer: About Women, Literature and Feminist Theory Today," Hélène Cixous' "The Laugh of the Medusa," and Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own (amongst countless others) offer a much-needed questioning of what it means to be a supposed "woman writer."

otherwise revolutionary nature of Loy's poetry, plays, and manifestos lost some of their momentum due to the exclusionary nature of early 20th century definitions of womanhood. On the other hand, as a woman writer that chose to include feminine sexuality and desire as well as fictionalized autobiographical elements within both her poetry and prose, Loy can very much be perceived as "an answer to a provocation" (Green 53), a counter to the anti-emotion, anti-personality modernisms offered by Pound and the Futurists.

To better understand how Loy confronts the misogynist tendencies of the early modernist formations, the first section of this chapter turns to various theorists' definitions of the descriptor "woman writer." By introducing the notion of sentimental, domestic, and semi-autobiographical forms of literature and contrasting them to what we have come to know as the crucial impersonality of modernism, I continue my questioning of Loy's place amongst her contemporaries. This establishes the building blocks for a proper analysis of Loy's variation on the genres and themes we have assumed to be trademarks of an early twentieth century poetics.

Following with a careful reading of Loy's "The Effectual Marriage or The Insipid Narrative of Gina and Miovanni," my second and third sections question what it meant to be one of the rare women deemed "worthy" of the title Futurist. Continuing with the periodical studies angle of my previous chapter, I equally draw attention to the important differences between "The Effectual Marriage" 's presence in Alfred Kreymborg's *Others: An Anthology of the New Verse* and Ezra Pound's *Instigations*. This in turn draws attention to the often ignored mutual influence Loy and Pound held over each other's work, while underlining the dangers of any canonizing process. For though Pound counts amongst one of Loy's stronger supports, he nonetheless edited "The Effectual Marriage" to what I perceive as a detrimental level, eliminating much of the

autobiographical elements the poem held in order to homogenize it with the various other works he felt worthy to be included in his anthologies.

3.1. Writing as a Woman

The "woman writer" descriptor has a surprising effect on both the reception of the works of poets such as Loy and our very understanding of their identities. Green describes this as an effect of "the late twentieth-century's intense interrogation of both the concept of 'woman' as a category and the idea of the 'woman writer' as a coherent identity." (54) In this sense, "woman" becomes a defining trait of the type of writer and therefore text the reader encounters. The writer in question is therefore "womanly" or inescapably "feminine." This is especially true of Loy whose career has constantly been haunted by her beauty. Conover describes this most succinctly in his introduction to *The Last Lunar Baedeker* when he writes: "In memoir after modernist memoir, [Loy] has been granted a forceful personality, a cerebral bearing, a perfect complexion, and a sexual body. But not a voice" (xii). Though much historical documentation remains to validate that she was indeed legendarily beautiful—most prominently in the countless complimentary descriptors found in her peers' autobiographies—the fact remains that Loy's beauty has no correlation with her mastery of the poetic language. Yet, even Conover begins his introduction by stating that Loy "was the Belle of the American Poetry Ball" (xi) while Burke insists on describing her "fashionable coiffure […] her intricate tortoiseshell earrings, elegant dress, and willowy figure" (3) in the very second paragraph of the prologue to *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy*, a now essential read for any would be Loy scholar. Though both Conover and Burke evidently mean well, one must ponder on even their focus on Loy's—as Conover put it— "sexual body" (xii).

Part of this insistence on Loy's physical appearance may have to do with her own fascination with beauty, fashion, and sexual liberation, as shown most prominently in her treatise on beauty and personality, "Auto-Facial-Construction." The text's opening line, "the face is our most potent symbol of personality" (165), hints at Loy's interest in questioning the connection between what our faces show outwardly and what our minds inwardly withhold. Loy's proposition of an appropriation of one's beauty through the "inherent right, not only to 'be ourselves' but to 'look like ourselves'" (165) mirror's the anxiety of losing one's sense of self found in Loy's poem "An Aged Woman:"

> Does your mirror Bedevil you
> or is the impossible
> possible to senility
> enabling the erstwhile agile
> narrow silhouette of self
> to hold in huge reserve
> this excessive incognito
> of a Bulbous stranger
> only to be exorcised by death ("An Aged Woman" 12-19)

Thus, the ambiguous proposition of an "esoteric anatomical science" (166) that could "permanently preserv[e]" the "original facial contours" (166) found within "Auto-Facial-Construction" demonstrates both a desire to maintain a sense of self and a longing to preserve a sense of the past. This exploration of beauty has more to do with the inner workings of the mind and less with an aesthetic approach to the topic. For though a connection can be drawn between

Loy's interest in fashion and critics' focus on her beauty, it is important to understand what "beauty" means within Loy's work.

Loy's portrayal of the "sexual body" within her prose maintains a clinical distance, as seen in her use of such terms as the "facial contour" and "muscular transformation" ("Auto-Facial-Construction" 165), or her proposal of an "unconditional surgical destruction of virginity" ("Feminist Manifesto" 155). Her poetry, on the other hand, uses metaphorical subtlety to demonstrate sexual desire, as shown in such lines as "Fleshes like weeds" ("Virgins" 49) or "Your drifting hands / faint as exotic snow" ("Nancy Cunard" 18-19). These variations on the topic of female beauty and desire come down to Loy's Feminine writing style, one that is gendered through its representation of women's realities, but remains distanced from a language of sexual objectification. In this fashion, Loy manages to speak of beauty while avoiding the masculine gaze through the medical terminology of her prose and the metaphorical avoidance of her poetry.

However, though Loy herself masters the fine line between feminine representation and sexual objectification, her critics have often failed to do the same in their understanding of both her work and her biography. By insisting on drawing a connection between her work and her "sexual body," critics and academics alike have painted her as a seductress, one who bedded not one, but two futurists, effectively diminishing her Futurist contributions to the writings of one enamoured of the movement's figurehead. As Conover writes:

> [I]t is difficult to determine how much of [Loy's] initial flirtation with Futurism had to do with her personal infatuation with [Marinetti], how much with the war propaganda that was sweeping Florence at the time, and how much with curiosity and rebellion" (179).

Conover's use of the word "flirtation" (179) underlines both the sexual nature of her relationship with Marinetti and the supposed "flighty or giddy" (OED 2017) nature of her interest. Either definition would imply that her interest in writing with a futurist aesthetic remains intricately connected to her sexuality as opposed to her intellect, a problematic statement to be sure. Conover leaves an opening for Loy's Futurist interests to rise out of "curiosity" and "rebellion," but these traits nonetheless feel diminutive in nature. They, like Conover's use of the words "initial flirtation," imply a passing investment in Futurism when in truth, the Futurist aesthetic—though separated from its misogynist tracts—remains very much sprinkled throughout Loy's work.

Marinetti was likely aware of Loy's impressive appropriation of his Futurist credo for he would go on to state that she was the exception to his declared "contempt for women" (Conover 180). Nonetheless, even when women writers such as Loy gained positive accolades for their literary intellect by both their peers and critics they nonetheless risked the stigma of being considered overly "sentimental." As Suzanne Clark writes in *Sentimental Modernism*: "Modernist criticism located women's writing within the obscenity of the sentimental" (2). Therefore, as she later states, "Modernism for women represents […] a doubleness as well as a double bind: not only the unwarranting of feminine authority but a rupture of conventional womanhood that promises freedom" (Clark 8). By being a Modernist whose intent it is to avoid sentimentality at all costs, the woman writer is forced to put aside a history of domestic writing, thus cutting herself from a rich lineage of otherwise prolific women writers.

Yet Loy's Negation aesthetic avoids traditional binary systems. Through a satirical voice whose mockery of movements such as the Futurists and Symbolists created new meaning, Loy paints both domestic and unsentimental poetic portraits that adequately illustrate the variegated

nature of the female readers of the periodicals of her time. Though she used words traditionally associated with feminine beauty, her portraits remain very much cerebral representations of the reality of women of the early 20th century. The virgins of "Virgins Plus Curtains Minus Dots" are more complex than the fetishized "woman who has trained herself to share a man's life in every particular" found in A. B.'s "The Failure of Marriage." The mother of "Parturition" is "Identical / With infinite Maternity / Indivisible [from] / The was—is—ever—shall—be / Of cosmic reproductivity" (99-106), and is therefore not only a woman but very much the foundation of the word "woman" 's very definition.

What becomes clear is that the work of Loy, as a "woman writer," is not entirely genderless. A distinctive Feminine vocabulary is used to portray a reality she personally experienced as a woman of the modern era. As will be evident to any reader familiar with the period, the struggle for women's rights, whether vote or marital related, is intimately connected to the feminine reality of the early twentieth century. How Loy portrays such a reality, however, is what is most interesting here. For unlike many of her contemporaries, whose "feminine writing" has been associated with sentimentality, Loy's Negation aesthetic is very much one grounded in the psychoanalytical, in the very psychosocial conflicts associated with imposing one's will upon the world[13]. How such a clinical approach to Feminine writing affects Loy's aesthetic is most eloquently demonstrated in her semi-autobiographical poem, "The Effectual Marriage or The Insipid Narrative of Gina and Miovanni."

[13] Burke describes this process as "the cultural 'composition' of a given society [as] reflected in the formal structures of its literary 'compositions'" ("Getting Spliced" 102). Thus, what I have described as Loy's Negation aesthetic comes as a direct result of the conflicts found within the cultural composition of her era.

3.2. The Ineffectual Editing of Loy

Loy held a rather complex relationship with the Futurists, one that is frequently hinted at in her works. Both "Aphorisms on Futurism" and "Feminist Manifesto" owe their existence, at least in part, to Loy and Marinetti's heated debates on the role of women in society, while Loy's poems "The Effectual Marriage" and "Human Cylinders" find their inspiration more solidly grounded in her affair with Futurist Giovanni Papini. Loy's relationship with the two Futurists varied greatly, Loy having found that Marinetti added twenty years to her life "from mere contact with his exuberant vitality" (Burke, *Becoming Modern* 180) while she felt "frightfully in love" with Papini despite her feeling that he hated her "with a voluptuous and exotic frigidity" (181). Disregarding for a moment the interesting dichotomy used to describe her relationship with Papini, what seems most apparent from Loy's letters to close confident and friend Mabel Dodge is her conflicted connection to the man. This struggle of the mind and body is cleverly illustrated in her poem "The Effectual Marriage or The Insipid Narrative of Gina and Miovanni," the semi-autobiographical quality of which is barely veiled by her switching over of the first letters of her first name and that of Giovanni Papini.

Written in the summer of 1915 during Loy's years in Italy amongst the Futurists and first published in Alfred Kreymborg's *Others: An Anthology of the New Verse*, "The Effectual Marriage" was praised by Ezra Pound as "one of the most memorable poems of the last thirty years, one which defined its epoch" (Conover, "Notes" 185). That the poem itself describes an evidently unhealthy relationship and that Pound insisted on renaming it "Ineffectual Marriage" hints at his having missed the poem's satirical view of relationships or, more troublingly, that Pound truly perceived this portrait of an unhappy marriage as the defining trait of his era. There

is a great deal that should be said—and has been said[14]—about Pound's praises of "The Effectual Marriage," especially his lengthy review of the piece found in his collection of essays, *Instigations* (1920). It is in fact due to his appreciation of this poem that Pound chose to invent a poetic movement, logopoeia, in both her and Marianne Moore's honour. That Pound labeled "The Effectual Marriage" a "distinctly national product" (Pound 235), however, only strengthens my belief that he did not fully grasp Loy's distaste with absolutes. To be labeled a "national product" when Loy was a constant traveler whose voice and identity were intentionally ambiguous, seems both to jar with Loy's self-representation, as well as her fears of being categorized.

It is nonetheless important to note that Pound does appreciate much of what Loy stands for. His association of Loy and Moore to logopoeia, a form of poetry that he defines as "akin to nothing but language which is a dance of the intelligence among words and ideas and modifications of ideas and characters" (Pound 234), is more than accurate. The "dance of the intelligence" is a proper descriptor for the satirical nature and metaphorical richness of Loy's work, while the underlining of her "modifications of ideas and characters" is a simplified but adequate understanding of Loy's reframing of the gender roles of her era and her complex portrayal of feminine identities. Yet, despite all he gets right, Pound's insistence on quoting only an excerpt of "The Effectual Marriage," one edited to the point of becoming another poem altogether, demonstrates an agenda Pound is legendary for.

[14] Carolyn Burke's "Getting Spliced: Modernism and Sexual Difference" makes an interesting point of Pound's having favoured Loy "as his smart female poet because Eliot chose Moore" (Burke 112). She goes on to demonstrate the influence Loy and Moore held over each other due to having been unintentionally paired and compared in countless critiques and anthologies.

His reputation as builder of anthologies and literary movements affects much of what we now understand as the modernist canon. His elevation of certain poets over those he deemed unworthy has dictated who we now perceive as the modernist greats. The result of his "larger impulse toward[s] [imposing] order in art and society" (Gibson 2), Pound contrasted writers against one another, compared otherwise seemingly unrelated works as a means of framing a certain literary canon we cannot help but elevate to this day. This has left otherwise talented poets in the dust heap of history and offered rather specific readings of literary works. One prime example of this can be found in Pound's treatment of Loy's "The Effectual Marriage."

That Pound identified the poem as a "distinctly national product" (Pound 235) when he himself acknowledged that Loy "has been equally subject to something like international influence" (239), is not entirely contradictory in that he likely believed that it was this international influence (what he names an unconscious influence by Franco-Uruguayan poet, Jules Laforgue) that forged the elements needed to produce "something which would not have come out of any other country" (235). Still, it is difficult to fully endorse the connection Pound makes between Loy and Laforgue since his interest in the second's poetry was intimately connected with "a particularly rich moment in the evolution of [his own] poetics," an instance when he practiced "an intensive reading of Laforgue initially inspired by Eliot's enthusiasms for the French poet" (Nicholls 58). Thus, it must be understood that Pound's comparative reading of Loy with Laforgue's own use of irony stems principally from his interest in linking his own fascination with the French poet and his lesser appreciation of Loy. It is a personal reading, one that was never truly acknowledged by Loy and which completely misses the evident Futurist (therefore Italian) influence. Thus, Pound's connection of Loy and fellow poet Marianne Moore to Laforgue not only frames Loy and Moore within a precise context, but equally limits their

work to a continuation of a masculine literary lineage. Pound's critique also dodges what might be read as a reworking of domestic writing, a form associated to a long line of "sentimental" women writers. Worse still, by choosing to rename and heavily edit Loy's poem, Pound inadvertently stripped it of much of what defined it as a uniquely Feminine piece.

Suzanne Churchill best sums up Pound's editing of Loy by underlining his excision of "personal references from what he deems Loy's best poem ('The Effectual Marriage')," as well as his re-presentation of the piece as a "compact, objective satire distinguished by its 'arid clarity' ('Ineffectual Marriage')" ("Poetics of Dislodging"181). These excisions are executed most prominently in the ablation of the first few stanzas of Loy's poem, choosing instead to begin with "So here we might dispense with her / Gina being a female" ("Ineffectual Marriage" 1-2). The irony of this correction is evident: Where Loy's version of the poem offers the option of dispensing with Gina as a mockery of her era's tendency of diminishing woman's importance in all matters of the intellect, Pound chooses to literally efface Gina's very identity.

By first stripping the poem's very title of its alternative subtitle "The Insipid Narrative of Gina and Miovanni," Pound establishes from the poem's very identifier that Gina and Miovanni's daily relationship dynamics, found in Loy's original poem, is of no true import. While Loy uses an overly flowery satire of the romantics to describe Gina ("Ho for the blue and red of her / The silent eyelids of her / The shiny smile of her" ("The Effectual Marriage" 37-39) to illustrate the Victorian influence of Gina's domesticity, Pound's rewriting keeps but the bare descriptive elements to bring Gina to light: "Gina being a female," "Gina had her use" "Patience said Gina is an attribute" ("Ineffectual Marriage" 2, 8, 18). The result of Pound's truncation of Loy's piece is a poem entirely distinguishable from its original, one that may fit his newly coined genre, logopoeia, more adequately than Loy's original poem.

Logopoeia, it is crucial to note, was born from Pound's belief that poetry could be divided into three types:

> (I) melopoeia, to wit, poetry which moves by its music, whether it be a music in words or an aptitude for, or suggestion of, accompanying music; (2) imagism, or poetry wherein the feelings of painting and sculpture are predominant [….] thirdly, logopoeia, or poetry that is akin to nothing but language which is a dance of the intelligence among words and ideas and modifications of ideas and characters. (Pound 234)

This splitting of poetry into three subdivisions is a perfect example of Pound's development of a Modernist canon, one erected on the very foundations of the literary movements that preceded it. As Mary Ellis Gibson notes, "[Pound's] effort was not to have no other texts before him but to have all other texts before him" (55). Thus, to adequately place himself and his chosen poets within a certain historical moment, Pound chose to compare his contemporaries with the writers of the eighteenth-century. Describing logopoeia, he remarks that "Pope and the eighteenth-century writers had in this medium a certain limited range" and that "[t]he intelligence of Laforgue ran through the whole gamut of his time" (234). This calculated evaluation permits Pound to elevate Loy and Moore's poetry by placing them in a category of his own making, one that surpasses Pope and his contemporaries while mirroring the "intelligence of Laforgue." The ruse is clever, it grants Pound the sole title of editor of what he defines as "interesting and readable […] poetriæ" (235), while equally establishing his three new poetic movements (melopoeia, imagism, and logopoeia) as the new and progressive forms of poetry of his era.

Pound's newly coined word was carefully chosen. Its prefix, "logos," is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy as the Greek term for "word," "speech," "reason," "law,"

"thesis," "argument" and, most interestingly—within the Christian context— "the Word of God" (518). Pound's definition of the term as "akin to nothing but language" and "a dance of the intelligence among words and ideas and modifications of ideas and characters" (234) therefore becomes more transparent. For a poet to write a logo poetic poem, one must have an unflinching logic, a keen intellect, and an almost clinical poetic style, or as Pound puts it, "[i]t is a mind cry, more than a heart cry" (234).

However, for Pound's literary movement to gain traction, it could not be limited to a witty definition and a past literary era. For his logopoeia to gain legitimacy, he needed to "acknowledge the many texts he found worthy of inclusion in his canon," these carefully selected works were then incorporated into his effort through his own literary efforts and editing skills, through "imitation, translation, quotation, parody" (Gibson 55). Therefore, so as to be able to include Loy within his logopoetic agenda, Pound had to first quote, then translate her poem, an effort that stripped it both of its autobiographical elements and much of its Feminine quality. As Suzanne Churchill notes in "The Poetics of Dislodging:" "[Pound] seem[s] deaf to Loy's informing feminist sensibility; [he] cannot hear the heart cry—the unmistakable note of psychic and emotional discord—that underlines the intellectual critique" (208). In his vehement efforts to build logopoeia as a defining poetic style, "[Pound's] editorial excisions result in a significant, if unintentional, expurgation of female sexuality from the domain of modernism" (208).

Though Pound's promotion of Loy and Moore serves as a bright example of the progressive strides in the Modernist movement's inclusion of various women writers, his "sponsorship of the two women is notable precisely because he appears to have ignored the fact that they were women" (Burke, "Getting Spliced" 100). Though this can be construed by contemporary readers and feminist critics as a positive outcome—our current understanding of

feminism revolving more prominently around gender fluidity and the abolition of labels—an early twentieth century understanding of Pound's genderless reading of Loy and Moore denotes a strange lack of understanding of the importance of gender in a poetic moment where women's gendered reality could inform and enrich a poetic effort with a political voice as of yet unrealized. Through such efforts as the ideals expressed in *The Freewoman* and "Feminist Manifesto," or the more eloquently formulated gender critiques of poems like "The Effectual Marriage," poets such as Loy managed to express opinions that varied importantly from the dogma of both the suffragette feminists and the misogynist views of overly masculine modernisms. That Pound chose to incorporate Loy and Moore within the literary movement he was building goes a long way to prove his respect and belief in such progressive viewpoints. Still,

> Pound nevertheless failed to notice other features of their poetry: their different uses of what he called 'melopoeia' and 'phanopoeia,'and their differently inflected awareness of how sexual difference can matter as both the 'what' and the 'how' in modernist poetry. (Burke, "Getting Spliced" 100)

In my previous chapter, I have demonstrated that this "what" and "how" of sexual difference lies at the very core of Loy's Negation aesthetic. By insisting on the "what" of subversive Feminine identities and the "how" of such characters' fight against the demeaning misogynist worlds they exist within, Loy demonstrates that sexual difference not only offers a much needed "negative" to the "positive" of masculine modernisms, but equally underlines a richness of unexplored voices. Thus, Loy manages to occupy both the "mind cry" (234) of Pound's logopoeia and the "heart cry" (234) that is said to lie outside of it. Through the "mind cry" Loy expresses the intellectual workings of her mind, the satirical social critique she is most

known for, and through her "heart cry" Loy uses self-satire to expresses personal occurrences at a safe, clinical distance. Thus, through the intellectual artistry of satire and metaphor, Mina's troubled romantic interactions with Papini become thinly veiled by Gina's pain and solitude at her inability to fully connect with Miovanni.

As Burke notes, "Pound was already certain that 'genius' was coded 'masculine,' and seems to have felt that, unlike the sentimental poetesses of the nineteenth century, intelligent modern women like Marianne Moore and Loy wrote just like men" (Burke, "Getting Spliced" 100). Yet, as I have already established, Loy's Femininity is intimately connected to her revolutionary aesthetic. Unable to distinguish between the gendered feminine sentimental emotions of the Romantics and the psychoanalytical sentimental offered by Loy's new Feminine, Pound misses the crucial depth of Loy's work. For using a Freudian sense of self, based on a subliminal self-observation, Loy's "The Effectual Marriage" does perform a variation of arid clarity as expressed by Pound's logopoeia, but this clarity shares more with the psychoanalysts' clinical detachment as they observe their patient with a quiet intellect to better observe the workings of the mind. It is from this distanced vantage point that Loy performs her best portrayal of the gender dynamics found within the domestic context. As Burke explains:

> Where [Pound's] 'logopoeia' emphasizes the energizing consciousness of the artist's mind [Loy's] 'mental spatiality' suggests, rather, a model more like a painterly version of the Freudian unconscious, in which images and meanings lie dormant yet accessible to the artist through a creative process that is a kind of self-analysis. (Burke, "Getting Spliced" 108)

Pound's own outside clinical detachment as he edits Loy's work into one more grounded in his own aesthetics denotes a particularly troubling form of self-appropriation. As Churchill

remarks: “Although[Pound] signals that he is citing only selected parts by enclosing the whole excerpt in quotation marks, he does not use ellipses to mark omissions between lines and stanzas” (Churchill 209). Effectively, though the poem remains identified as Loy’s by name, the disingenuous nature of Pound’s citation methods effectively grants him a creative liberty with her piece that strips it of any true independent identity. It is equally interesting to note, that Loy is not mentioned within *Instigation*’s table of contents. Neither is the poem. “The Effectual Marriage,” now rebranded “Ineffectual Marriage” blurs into the very fabric of Pound’s text, lost amongst countless other Poundian attempts at branding a unique modernism.

For Pound’s unique modernism to be effective, Loy’s poem had to be simplified to its bare essence. The narrative frame, what Churchill identifies as an “ungainly title and troubling closing note” had to be stripped from its core principals to avoid making the reader “uncomfortably aware of the materials, techniques, and labor involved in the making of the poem” (209-210). Though Churchill seems to see this as being the crux of what makes Loy’s poem difficult due to its “abrup[t] displace[ment] [of] its internal limits into an external context. (210), I cannot help but feel that these are the exact traits that add richness to the piece. The “ungainly title” serves to throw off the reader, draw them into the question of whether the narrative is built on facts. Such a questioning lends itself to a more intimate approach to reading, a desire to locate oneself both within the poem and within Loy’s very psyche. This encourages forms of discourse rather reminiscent of those found in *The Freewoman*, opening an intertextuality that encourages the reader to pursue Loy’s other poems in search of possible truths amongst the mystery of her Negation aesthetic. The “troubling closing note” performs a rather similar task in the presence of its jarring “I” and its offering of a location (Forte dei Marmi) where Loy was apparently residing at the time of the poem’s creation. By imposing an “I,” one

that lies both within and outside of the text, Loy addresses the reader directly, opening a discussion with a plausible bystander who might equally be in a situation where she feels she is a "mad woman". Like *The Freewoman*'s correspondence section, this opens a narrative flow between the reader, Loy, the poetic "I," and Gina herself. Such a discourse, however, is lost in Pound's erasure of Loy's autobiographical elements. Effectively eliminating the relatable nature of the poem, the possible critical thinking generated by the malaise created by readers coming to terms with the darker reality hidden behind Loy's satirical veil, and any possibility for social awakening. By editing a poem Pound seems to genuinely appreciate, he ironically strips it of its strengths. Though Pound's reframing of Loy's poem does extend its accessibility to readers of various circles, it equally loses much of the political strength that makes a Loy poem unique, leaving the literary wit without its impactful resolve. "The Effectual Marriage" becomes "ineffectual" indeed.

The true strength of "The Effectual Marriage" 's satire lies in its critique of patriarchal society's view that such a marriage would be "effectual" while equally offering a self-satire in underlining the "insipid" nature of such a domestic narrative. By embodying both the outside "I" of the addendum and the implied "I" of the main protagonist, Loy avoids the intimate and ego-centric nature of early domestic/sentimentalist writing. Instead, she promotes a negative space for the reader to occupy, one that demonstrates a keen understanding of the gender issues Pound's "Ineffectual Marriage" lacks. It is this ability to view the feminine subject from both an interior and exterior local that led to Loy's eventual promotion amongst Feminist academics. Her ability to step outside of herself and analyse the gender question with a clinical detachment permits Loy's radical poetic voice to transcend, posthumously, the very limitative structures Pound's blindness to sexual difference unintentionally promoted.

3.3. The Effectual Marriage of Truth and Fiction

So as to avoid falling in the trap of oversimplifying Loy's work, as Pound's analysis involuntarily did, it is important to note that the gender dynamics found within Loy's "The Effectual Marriage" are born within a specific context and historical period, bred from a localized and culturally established notion of what is defined as "man" and what is implied by the noun "woman." As Corinne E. Blackmer writes in "Writing Poetry like a 'Woman,'" "Feminist literary history is now a complex endeavor that must forge methodologies that avoid an essentialized, transhistorical conception of Woman while analyzing the ways in which gender *and* sexuality mold women's writing practices" (131). This is especially important when analyzing a poem such as "The Effectual Marriage" where Loy uses clichéd depictions of domesticity to illustrate the irrational nature of such exchanges. Equally important is to avoid ignoring, as Pound did, the notable feminine perspective offered by Loy's unique poetic voice, one that Pound stripped in his editing attempt at establishing logopoeia as a distinct genre.

Loy's very intimate portrait of the daily life of an early twentieth century couple transcends what might first be perceived as a sentimental portrayal of one's troubled relationship and reaches a more critical illustration of the gender dynamics of her time. The poem begins with a truly domestic noun "The door" and pursues it with the immediate affirmation that it is "an absurd thing" (1). This sets the tone for the complex portrayal of domesticity Loy has constructed for us. The door being the entryway and the exit to both the physical and psychological lieu of intimacy of Gina and Miovanni's relationship, it is what supposedly secures them from the judgement of the public space outside, a place where one can truly be oneself. This is strengthened by the following stanza where Loy writes that "this being of who

they were" (7) was important to Gina and Miovanni. Though the poem begins by implying that being themselves and being together made them "quite complete" (10), the poem goes on to describe in detail their mutual seclusion, Miovanni alone with his thoughts in the library, Gina alone with hers in the kitchen. Though Miovanni is portrayed as thriving intellectually in such solitude, Gina seems to find little meaning in her own closed off space.

It is important to note, however, that Loy is careful to depict the complex nature of such a relationship. Gina, in great respect of her partner's brilliance, does not dare disturb him supposing that a "round light [would shine] where his mind was" (69) and that this bright light might blind her, or worse, "that she should see Nothing at all" (73). The implication is that should Gina discover that Miovanni was not the brilliant man she believes him to be, her world, a world of loving servitude and silent respect, would be destroyed and much of her self-imposed motivations for continuing to embody this subordinate role would be proven misguided. Therefore, the insipid nature of their relationship, implied by the poem's second title, and depicted throughout the narrative, is what keeps the marriage "effectual." The complexity of the poem lies in its depiction of interwoven human dependencies under the guise of monotonous human interactions.

Gina is depicted as having "no axis to revolve on" without her Miovanni (99), her wants and desires limited to wishing "that still Miovanni would love her to-morrow" (78-79) and wanting "everything To be everything in woman" (84-85). "Woman," within this poem being limited to "her love [,] Succulent meals [,] and an occasional caress" (63-74), Gina's desire to be "everything in woman" can but be limited to the banality of their relationship and an unsatisfied craving for intimate contact. As she did in "Virgins Plus Curtains Minus Dots," in which Loy depicts virgins whose flesh "throbs to the night" ("Virgins" 54), "The Effectual Marriage"

represents a woman's sexual desires or, more accurately, unsatiated desires. As for Miovanni, "remain[ing] Monumentally the same" (95), it is likely that much of his identity would crumble without Gina as the quiet feminine audience to his supposed genius. The careful balance of their relationship lies on their mutual disregard for their true selves, perpetuating masks of stereotypical gender identities to survive. Effectively, Loy depicts the eternal debate of the Victorian heritage she despises so vehemently: Mind over matter, intellect over the desires of the flesh.

In writing this poem, Loy depicts on a small scale the larger gender war of her time while underlining the cruel prison created by the imposition of the public sphere over the private. The door found at the start of the poem is absurd for it is a lie. Though the door and the house implied by it is meant to hint at a private sphere, a space where Gina and Miovanni have the possibility to thrive as a productive unit through mutual respect of their independent identities and collective unity, this private sphere never truly comes into play. This is due to the societal values of the public sphere having seeped into their very sense of selfhood. To keep the peace in their relationship, Miovanni must be "magnificently man" (56), though he himself may not be aware of what that truly implies, while Gina must remain "insignificantly a woman who underst[ands]" (57). The true doors are within their private space, creating smaller pockets of seclusion that keep Gina apart from both her partner and the outside world. The only open space for selfhood seems to lie in poems she writes on milk bills between daily tasks:

> The first strophe Good morning
> The second Good night. (110-111)

Gina, as a mirror of Loy the poet who finds herself unable to describe her relationship with Papini other than through an insipid and unhealthy relationship, is unable to produce more than an insipid poem describing the start and end of a day, with little in between.

Loy, however, is unable to end on an overly sentimental note. While the last stanza describes Gina as finding "audacious happinesses" in the

> […] scrubbed smell of the white-wood table
> Greasy cleanliness of the chopper board
> The coloured vegetables
> Intuited quality of flour
> Crickly sparks of straw-fanned charcoal (114-118)

Loy halts her own narrative with an author's note of sorts:

> (This narrative halted when I learned that the
> house which inspired it was the home of a mad
> woman.
> —Forte dei Marmi) (123-126)

Cutting her poem short, Loy invites the reader to disregard the human drama she just portrayed by drawing our attention to the "mad" nature of a woman willing to call home a house whose door would lead one to such a relationship. Having spent the entirety of the poem building Gina to a relatable level, one where a reader might find justification for the heroine's plight, Loy dismisses the heroine as "mad," a criticism that was hinted upon earlier in the poem when Loy insisted on writing that she was "insignificantly a woman"(57), or that "happy women are immaterial" (19) and that we the reader might therefore have "dispense[d] with [Gina]"(20) altogether, she "being a female"(21).

How should one read such statements? Loy evidently did not feel that her character should be dispensed of since the whole of the narrative revolves around her. And though it is insisted upon that she would not exist without her Miovanni, without her presence to bolster his ego, he himself would have little reason for existing, thus the "Effectual Marriage" of the title. Therefore, the reason for the title remaining "The Effectual Marriage" and not the "Ineffectual Marriage" insisted upon by Pound, lies firmly grounded in Loy's delicate satirical stance. Avoiding a direct attack on the institution of marriage of her time, Loy performs an indirect assault through an intimate portrayal of the dual prison of such an insipid bond. Both Gina and Miovanni find themselves in a codependent relationship without ever being able to truly communicate with one another. They must assume that the other embodies the gendered stereotype they hoped for in a marriage and must tiptoe around each other so as to carefully avoid the shattering of this fictitious reality.

An almost flawless mirroring of such dynamics can be found in T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of Prufrock," in which we find a male voice to counteract Gina's own, a persona not dissimilar to Loy's Miovanni. Never daring to speak a word or take any decisive action, Eliot's protagonist internally repeats such mantras as "do I dare" (42, 53) and "how should I presume" (64,72, 81), never truly vocalizing a single thought until he grows old and it is far too late. As plausible counter to Loy's "The Effectual Marriage," Eliot's "The Love Song of Prufrock" can be seen as Miovanni's unspoken perspective, whose silence hints at a similar longing to communicate without being able to find the right word or the right moment. However, much like the Miovanni of Loy's poem, the protagonist of Eliot's "Prufrock" seems unable to acknowledge his partner's presence. Safe for a few "you"s (1,10,30,34,35), often connected to a "me," and two lonely "we"s (158,161), no true descriptors are offered for the protagonist's lover. The inability

to communicate thus resides in a hesitance that becomes a distancing. Like Loy's Miovanni who "thought alone in the dark" (67), Eliot's male protagonist seems closed off from his partner. Where Loy's poem varies from Eliot's however is in her insistence on representing the very feminine perspective that is absent from Eliot's "Prufrock". Pound's interpretation however, removes this perspective, effectively promoting a poem whose representation of the feminine voice is just as lacking as "Prufrock"'s. This elusion is most problematic due to the very nature of the poem's intent. Gina's perspective is crucial to Loy's attempt at demonstrating the problematic dynamics found within the gendered relationships of her era.

The accusation of "mad woman" (124-125) Loy places on Gina, the same addendum that Pound removed from his editing of the poem, is central to the poem's argument. It is both a demand for women to remove themselves from such unhealthy relationships and a self-critique on Loy's part, having herself felt trapped in such a relationship. Writing to Dodge, she expresses her distress at wondering "if hatred is the truth & love the lie—or whether even hatred is only jealousy" (Burke, *Becoming Modern* 182). Choosing to avoid falling into the same trap Gina found herself in, Loy had to extricate herself from what had become an unhealthy relationship between herself and Papini. Still, the "mad woman" accusation remains playful, tinted with a slight ironic tone that keeps it from being truly insulting. As with Loy's suggestion that "we might dispense with [Gina]" altogether ("The Effectual Marriage" 20), the poem's warning to women in unhealthy relationships is jocular in nature, sympathetic, and lends itself to an almost confidential tone. The parenthesis that surrounds the addendum keeps it separate from the rest of the poem while keeping it within its poetic context. This postscript of sorts can both be perceived as written by the author to the reader, a clever breaking of the fourth wall, or it can be seen as the words of an omniscient narrator, the very eyes that observe the poem's two protagonists. It is this

possible exterior bystander that adds the most depth to the poem, blending the poetic "I" with the authorial "I" with a subtlety that keeps Loy at an emotional distance from the piece all the while addressing the reader with an intimacy that hints at an ideological confrontation not unlike that of "Feminist Manifesto."

The framing narrator, a voyeur whose bland description of Gina and Miovanni paints a cruel portrait of their relationship, can be seen as a scrutiny of Loy and Papini's own unhappy dynamic, lending the poem an almost Freudian psychoanalytical edge. "The Effectual Marriage" is intimately autobiographical not in its actual historical analysis but in its vivid portrayal of feminine wanting. And though Pound insists on branding it with his newly constructed genre, logopoeia, the implied "arid clarity" (Pound 234) that is connected to this literary style is not fully realized. For though Loy uses satire to avoid a true confrontation of the self, a cold distancing that may be connected to Pound's descriptors "mind cry" over "heart cry" (234), "The Effectual Marriage" remains a domestic portrait of a tragic relationship, one whose "sentimental" quality is not fully removed. That Pound chose to shorten the poem and rename it is an example of the ways in which patriarchal institutions such as Pound's canon building rebranded otherwise groundbreaking content so as to make them easier to categorize.

That Loy then published "Black Virginity" with the same clinical detachedness Pound imposed on "The Effectual Marriage," goes further to demonstrate the means through which he may have modified Loy's original aesthetics. "Black Virginity" 's quick succession of shortened sentences and carefully selected words lend a staccato tone that is rather contrasting to "The Effectual Marriage" 's intentionally overwrought language:

Baby Priests

On green sward

Yew-closed

Scuttle to sunbeams (1-4)

Nonetheless, it is important to note that the influence did not only go one way. As Mary Ellis Gibson notes in *Epic Reinvented: Ezra Pound and the Victorians*, "Pound was unusually, if not uniquely, a modern poet who made himself a poet through imitation" (55). As is evident by Pound's omnipresence within Modernist anthologies contrasted with the limited integration of Loy's work, Pound's "imitation" of Loy has only been documented by a few notable theorists. This is especially troubling when one considers the evidence that Pound was writing *Homage to Sextus Propertius* around the same time he was developing a new critical theory specifically around the poetic techniques of Loy and Moore (Burke, "Getting Spliced" 99).

Pound's interest in Loy's career is most evident in his branding of her and Moore with the logopoeia genre, but more subtly we can remark upon Pound's naming of the very book within which he developed the critical theory behind logopoeia: *Instigations*, a compendium of his selected essays and literary critiques. It is within that Pound republished his observations on Loy, Moore, and logopoeia, but equally draws out a more developed review of Loy's "The Effectual Marriage." Therefore, that the word "instigation" itself is found within Loy's very poem seems of great importance:

Being an incipience a correlative

an instigation of the reaction of man

From the palpable to the transcendent

Mollescent irritant of his fantasy

Gina had her use Being useful

The word “instigation” is defined in the Oxford English dictionary as “the action or process of instigating [bringing about] an action or event” (OED 2017). Used within the context of the poem “The Effectual Marriage,” “instigation” is used to better illustrate Gina’s passive nature within the theatre of her relationship, a burgeoning personality whose formation is primarily dictated by her contrast with Miovanni’s own active nature. Thus, Loy depicts mutual dependency and a plot-related need for Gina’s complacency as a foil for Miovanni’s supposed genius. Therefore, in reclaiming the word for the title of the very book whose intent it is to analyze Loy’s work (amongst others), Pound effectively reclaims Gina’s productive quality to begin an event of his own: the creation of logopoeia.

Whether Pound intended to make a subtle ode to Loy’s poem by using “instigation” as his title is hard to ascertain, but the interconnected nature of their mutual influence is important to note, a fact that Suzanne Churchill equally remarks upon in “Mina Loy: The Poetics of Dislodging.” That this interconnected nature has been mostly ignored by modernist historians and anthologies alike furthers my belief in a troubling erasure of not only Femininity from the Modernist canon, but a more drastic effacement of the very presence of women within Modernism’s origins. It is with the intent of reversing part of this process that my following chapter pursues my analysis of Loy’s influence on her contemporaries by analyzing the interconnected nature of Loy, Marinetti, and Valentine de Saint-Point’s Futurist manifestos.

4. *La Nouvelle Femme* & Warring Feminine Identities

Many critics have identified Mina Loy as not only a feminist, but also very much the embodiment of the modern woman. As a reporter for the *New York Evening Sun* wrote: "no natural history contains her habitat… If she isn't the modern woman, who is, pray?" (Conover, "Introduction" xvi) Loy would, however, likely have preferred the term "new Feminine." Her notorious discomfort at the idea of being restricted to a single category, and the idea of being attributed the descriptor "woman," modern or not, would have likely troubled her due to the problematic gender symbols the noun embodied at the time. As Conover writes in his introduction to *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*, "rather than allowing herself to be fixed by an identity, [Loy] interloped, using her various identities to transform the cultures and social milieus she inhabited" (Conover, "Introduction" xiii). Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" performs this very type of social and cultural transformation by imposing a new understanding of the Feminine.

This new form of femininity, one not dictated by the overprotective presence of man, is instead defined by a desire for more than the "inadequate" attempt at gender equality she felt the suffragette feminists were seeking at the time (Loy 153). As Loy writes, "leave off looking to men to find out what you are <u>not</u>—seek within yourselves to find out what you <u>are</u>" (Loy 154). Yet, despite her strong critique of gender dynamics in both her poetic and prose undertakings, despite a ripe environment for such a radical response as the "Feminist Manifesto," Loy felt uncomfortable at the idea of labeling herself a feminist, choosing not to publish the manifesto. Instead, she had it reviewed privately by her close friend and confidant Mabel Dodge. In fact, previous to its publication within the 1982 printing of *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*, Loy's manifesto was left untouched and unseen amongst Dodge's papers. Not only was it not in circulation during

the rise of what we now conceive as the "first wave" of feminism, but Loy expressed a slight reticence towards the piece, felt as what seems like a staged detachment—if not embarrassment—at this early foray into what she calls "the feminist question" (Loy, "Feminist Manifesto Draft" 1). In her notes at the top of the draft of the manifesto she sent to Dodge, she indicated that it was a "rough draught" and that it would "easily be proved fallacious—There is no truth—anywhere" (Loy 1). It is however difficult to dismiss Loy's manifesto as a botched attempt since she was very likely aware of Dodge's interest in such topics, having considered her "the only woman yet evolved'" (Harris 17).

It would seem much more likely that her insecurities at publishing the manifesto in an actual feminist weekly such as Marsden's *The Freewoman* had more to do with her inability to fully connect with the movement as it existed at the time of "Feminist Manifesto" 's writing. As she wrote to Dodge, "I feel rather hopeless of devotion to the Woman-cause—Slaves will believe that chains are protectors…they are the more efficient for the coward" (Conover, "Notes" 216). Her evident disgust at women unable to "evolve" as she and Dodge had, was likely as much a factor in the manifesto's having remained unpublished for so long. As I have already established, Loy believed that truly Feminine women had to avoid adapting "themselves to a theoretical valuation of their sex as a relative impersonality (Loy 154). In this way, Loy criticized both the impersonal nature of her modernist contemporaries and reclaimed the word "Feminine" altogether.

This reclaiming of the capitalized "Feminine" precedes yet seems to partially mirror renowned separatist feminist Sarah Hoagland's attempt to rework the term "Woman" and "lesbian" in the late 1980s. Much like Hoagland, who believed that "one is not born a woman because 'woman' is a constructed category [that is] connected to the category 'man'" (521), Loy

felt that most forms of gendered categories (such as the parasite, prostitute, mother, and mistress) had to be avoided entirely through self-negation. Yet, unlike Hoagland, whose political era was more prepared for such ideologies, Loy felt unable to bring herself to publish this alternative to women's understanding of themselves. As Burke remarks, "the spirited independence of Mina's 'Feminist Manifesto' could be maintained as long as she did not have to test it" (*Becoming Modern* 180). Having remained skeptical of the various feminist movements of her era, she had very little motivation to expose her theory at all. For as Blau DuPlessis notes, Loy's "liberatory feminism" lay in opposition to "both sex radicals and Social-Purity reformers," the two principal variations of early twentieth century feminism ("Seismic Orgasm" 57).

On the one hand, the Social-Purity reformers' interpretation of sexuality as danger would have been too chaste for Loy's own thematic exploration of heterosexuality, while the sex radicals' open encouragement of women's sexual desires would have been of interest to Loy though lacking in any true revolutionary stances. Unable to abide by either movements' limiting tendencies, Loy sums up both movements through her "**Parasitism**, & **Prostitution**" duality. As Marsden has stated "female purity and passionlessness was compelled by men, retro moralism, and the marriage market" (Blau DuPlessis, "Seismic Orgasm" 56). From such an angle, the Social-Purity reformers would thus fall within Loy's Parasitism category, having parasitically taken advantage of the marriage market. While, on the other hand, the sex radicals risked the danger of falling into Prostitution, or "the private ownership of women in marriage as a form of sex work" (56). However, it is unlikely that Loy's opposition to both feminist movements was the only cause for "Feminist Manifesto" 's remaining unpublished. After all, most of its ideologies were expressed in the poems she wrote. A darker threat, found within the early 20th century gender symbol of the hysteric may more truthfully be to blame.

In *Women in Modern Drama: Freud, Feminism, and European Theater at the Turn of the Century* (1989), Gail Finney establishes the feminist and the hysteric as lying at the epicentre of early 20th century gender symbols, describing the feminist as "a rebellious, emancipatory, and outer-directed response to the condition of female oppression," and hysterics as "a rejection of society that was passive, inner-directed, and ultimately self-destructive" (qtd. in Felski 3). Though it would be crucial to observe the limiting and oppressive nature of such a dualistic representation of women's rebellion to patriarchal structures, for the purposes of this essay, it remains evident which category modernist critics would have placed Loy in. Referring to her as a "modern woman" implied a defiant streak that was more akin to an "outer-directed response" one seen more as rebellious than in any way self-destructive. She fascinated critics and readers alike as an oddity, often criticized, at times adored, but never fully embraced.

Loy was likely aware of the precarious position she found herself in. Her desire to never fully be integrated within the feminist politics of her era demonstrate a clear awareness of the dangers of being limited to one gender. She very likely used the "modern woman" or "feminist" categories she was at times branded with as masks to infiltrate the male owned milieu that surrounded her. Though she must have felt a partial kinship with those of her gender that had attained a "superior" status (Loy, "Feminist Manifesto" 155), she nonetheless draws a thick line between them and the "Inadequate" (153) feminist movements of her era. Her need to separate the women that are "not yet Feminine" (154) from her "superior" women, grants her the possibility of fully appropriating the new form of Feminine she aims for.

This new incarnation of Femininity is one fully unchained from the mistress and mother roles inscribed on her gender. However, this new identity remains oddly sex positive in such lines as "the realisation in defiance of superstition that there is nothing impure in sex" (156). We

must therefore understand Loy's Femininity as one that seeks to redefine itself as separate from man, highly self-affirmative, yet still aware of itself as part of a gendered structure that can never fully promote equality. Woman must live apart or beside man and his limiting categories, but must remain connected to "maternity" (155) in a newly empowered way.

Though the critics of the early 20th century were doubtlessly correct in their naming her a modern woman, they were unable to understand her as a burgeoning form of new feminism. Like Pound who appreciated her logo poetic style without truly embracing the ways her Feminine qualities modified his original definition for logopoeia, so the media that labeled her a "modern woman" understood her solely as such through her rebellious apparel and shocking poetry as opposed to through her progressive thinking. Still, Loy would have likely preferred to be associated with a "new femininity" instead of her "new woman" title, as indicated by her manifesto's specific choice of the adjective "feminine" over the more restrictive noun, "woman." Harris speaks of her "privileging of 'feminine' over 'woman'" as a means of "invert[ing] the dominant preference of twentieth-century feminism" (24 Harris). She explains this specific preference for the adjective "feminine" as being due to the noun "woman's" nature of "induc[ing] claustration, whereas the adjective leaves a little room for manoeuvre" (24).

Loy's desire was therefore to move away from feminism altogether, at least in its 20th century iteration, and to move to a new Feminine identity. Loy's discomfort at being categorized may have kept her from a true gender solidarity due to the manifesto's absence from the circles it could have assisted. However, it may be through this partial erasure that feminist scholars of the early 1980s eventually recognize Loy as a separate movement in her own right, one that offers a new comprehension of the very word "Femininity." To better comprehend the convoluted nature

of Loy's particular "feminism," let us turn to various influences that led to Loy's conception of her "Feminist Manifesto."

4.1. Origins of the Manifesto

Though Loy had already garnered increasing interest as a painter, her early attempts at poetry only truly began in 1913 during her time in Florence. It was there that she met her closest friend and confident Mabel Dodge, an inspiration and a gateway to the poets, painters, and publishers that would later shape her career. Most importantly, it was Dodge's article, "Speculations, or Post-Impressions in Prose," that first created in Loy the desire to "write about anything that matters" (Burke, *Becoming Modern* 146). Though Loy's first attempts at poetry "sound[ed] old-fashioned to [Dodge] whose ears were attuned to Post-Impressionist cadences" (159), she showed enough interest in her poem "There Is No Life or Death" to pass it on to photographer and *Camera Work* publisher Alfred Stieglitz. It was through him that both "There Is No Life or Death" and "Aphorisms on Futurism" were printed, signaling the start of her tumultuous career.

Dodge's free spirit and progressive way of thinking undoubtedly held a strong sway over Loy's poetic and prose writings—this is proven by the long trace of correspondences between the two women found at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University—but it was the conflictual dynamic she shared with Filippo Tommaso Marinetti that drove her to write both "Aphorisms on Futurism" and "Feminist Manifesto." Combined, Dodge and Marinetti became the atypical muses that launched a poetic voice that is neither truly feminist, neither truly futurist: a true New Woman's voice for the Modern era. It is with the intent of tracking the origins of this unique voice that I now turn to the origins of Loy's manifestos.

The early 20th century saw an explosion of artistic manifestos, what Mary Ann Caws names "the Manifesto Moment" (xxii). In the span of ten years, between 1909 and 1919, the world witnessed the rise of the Futurists, Cubists, and Vorticists. Each movement, in turn, brought with it its own variation on the manifesto genre. Magali Sarfatti Larson explains this "proliferation of manifestos" as the result of "the modernist artist's efforts to forestall marginalization by the corporate economy that has predominated in England and America since roughly the 1890s" (Larson xvii-xviii). Johanna E. Vondeling, who analyses Larson's text in passing, equally makes connections between modernist writers and their need to claim an identity within the neutral politics of capitalism. Vondeling pays particular attention to the writers' "vulnerability to the vicissitudes of literary fashion and the marketplace generally" (Vondeling 128). She describes the importance poets of Loy's era put on establishing themselves not only as artists, but as holders of a new political revelation. What both Larson and Vondeling's observations seem to hint at is the modernist artist's struggle with a sense of selfhood in an industrial age whose very economic progress encouraged reproduction over individuality.

However, to state that manifestos attempted to work against the status-quo nature of capitalism is not the same thing as arguing that they overtly subdued its effects. I would go so far as to argue that manifestos, despite their attempts at portraying new ways of thinking, cannot help but lose their progressive strides over time. By demanding change in a system that imposes continuity manifestos can but document the forward motion of capitalism, a progress they never had the strength to enact true change over. This does not mean that manifestos have no impact, only that this influence comes more implicitly from the works of art and literature they engender, from the productive creativity that seeps into society at large. Or, as Caws notes in *Manifesto: A*

Century of Isms, "the manifest proclamation itself marks a moment, whose trace it leaves as a post-event commemoration. Often the event is exactly its own announcement and nothing more" (xx). The manifesto is thus easily outdated, reinterpreted, decontextualized, marking a fixed moment in time that may be misinterpreted by readers outside of its specific context. For this reason, I believe in the importance of retracing the manifesto's context so as to gain a better understanding of its cultural resonance.

One means of tracing these small fissures in the otherwise self-replicating loop of capitalism is in the study and promotion of what is not included in the literary canon, for much of this canon is the direct result of multiple manifesto formations. Vondeling, for one, makes a connection between Loy's absence from the modernist canon and what she states as "the extent to which materialist concerns influence the transmission and accumulation of cultural capital" (141). Through an explanation of Loy's unsteady income and the lack of endorsement she suffered from, Vondeling finds a reason for the poet's lack of major publications. Unable to sustain herself financially, Loy was unable to produce as prolifically as fellow poets such as Pound or Elliot. By not producing as frequently she could not gain the attention of publishers and therefore could not accumulate the funds needed to continue her literary endeavour.

However, Vondeling's study of Loy's unsteady income does not speak to the resurrection of her work and biography through the efforts of Loy scholars like Roger L. Conover, Sara Crangle, and Carolyn Burke. Nor does it speak of the limited, though nonetheless interesting, increase of her work's circulation through the rise of academic curiosity in the early 1980s, especially within feminist circuits and gender studies scholars. Loy's lack of endorsement in the early 20th century therefore had no lasting impact on Loy's small but growing popularity to this day. On the contrary, the rarity of her work may very well be the reason behind her growing

presence in the academic circuit. As mentioned in my previous chapters, Loy's poetry, much like her non-fiction, remained on the fringe of periodicals—present but overshadowed by pieces more relevant to the modernist canon we have grown accustomed to. This location between the lines of now forgotten war propaganda has since been underlined and highlighted by periodical and feminist students alike, each seeking out a long forgotten history. Though some academics use Loy as a stepping-stone for the writing of new female oriented modernist canons, my interest here lies more in deciphering the "why" behind Loy's resurrection of sorts.

My first chapter noted upon the similitudes and differences between Dora Marsden and Mina Loy's creation of new Feminine identities, while my second chapter has endeavoured to observe Loy's poetry through a periodical studies lens in an attempt at finding out what it meant for her to be a "woman writer" and a "feminist" of sorts in a predominantly masculine institution. These chapters have led to speculations on the various influences on her oeuvre as a whole, chiefly the progressive views expounded upon in *The Freewoman* and the various articles, images, and poems she found herself published with in the little magazines that encouraged her work. However, as I have mentioned, Loy's efforts do not seem to have caused any lasting effects on our historical understanding of both feminism and woman's place in the modernist canon. As Vondeling implies, this may have been due to a lack of funds leading her to find it difficult to truly take on a revolutionary stance. Equally possible is the worry Loy might have felt at expressing feminist views in publications that thrived in an otherwise patriarchal society. It is my contention, however, that Loy's lack of concrete feminist stances lay more in her continued dissatisfaction with categorization.

Loy did not express drastic feminist views for she felt the feminist formations of her era were not determined enough in their own attempts at breaking free from the limiting nature of

societal norms. Loy's political stances therefore took on a more subdued position, one that infiltrated pre-established categories and dismantled them from within through clever mockery. This subversive technique therefore involved a parodic form that branches out throughout her body of work. Using various influences she encountered throughout her literary production, she found inspiration in the elements she deemed worthy of her time and discarded those she found distasteful—not unlike Pound's own editing processes. In this manner, Marinetti's "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" becomes a stylistic influence for the "Feminist Manifesto" but is stripped of its masculine pretension.

Loy's odd connection with the Futurist movement is hard to ignore, as I have made abundantly clear. Despite what seems like a counterintuitive connection between the masculine focus of Futurism and the centrality of women within Loy's own work, she nonetheless held a strong fascination with Marinetti's views. As Rowan Harris writes: "Loy wrote several poems in which she presented female figures caught up in Futurism and ironized their desire for Futurist recognition" (Harris 27). Though Loy eventually mocked these fictitious women's dynamics with Futurist men in her plays "The Pamperers" and "The Sacred Prostitute,"[15] Loy's respect of "Manifesto of Futurism" 's style and many of its ideals remain between the lines of both "Aphorisms of Futurism" and her "Feminist Manifesto."

Conover and Harris draw our attention to Loy's use of disguises to infiltrate the world of men, a space she at times felt strongly connected to and at others an infiltrator of. Harris speaks of the fictitious—though likely autobiographical—portraits of women found within Loy's work (27). These characters took on masculine identities to inhabit the Futurist world as spies of sorts.

[15] Though I have not managed to incorporate Loy's Futurist plays, Sara Crangle's Stories and Essays of Mina Loy provides a rich body of work of Loy's most prominent theatrical writings, an essential read for any Loy scholar.

Conover instead describes Loy as wearing "femininity as a mask, sometimes to disguise what she often called her 'masculine side'" (Conover, "Introduction" xiv). Either way, Loy evidently needed to complicate the nature of her gender identification so as to interact with the Futurists without fully losing her sense of self. This was in part due to a need for women of her time to make their "feminism less threatening" (xiv). As demonstrated by the unflattering exchanges between male and female correspondents in *The Freewoman*, the feminist movement of the early 20th century was often perceived by its detractors as limited to stereotypical roles as either rebellious feminists or self-destructive hysterics. A poet such as Loy would have been heavily limited in her attempts at expressing the troubled reality of her sex without taking a "masculine" position amongst the dominant male artists of her era. This was quickly proven to her upon hearing of Margaret Sanger, a writer who had legal issues due to her publication of the magazine, *The Woman Rebel*, which critics condemned as "obscene, lewd and lascivious" (Burke 179).

Thus, through taking on such a "masculine" position, Loy managed a first, critical take on Marinetti's "Manifesto of Futurism" by creating "Aphorisms on Futurism." Through this first manifesto, Loy asserted "not only her own authority, but the authority and potential of every individual" (Vondeling 140). Lines such as "BUT the smallest person, potentially, is as great as the Universe" (Loy 149), demonstrate Loy's sense of a universal identity, one filled with infinite potentiality. Loy turns the individualist destructive force of Futurism into a productive stance, one that promotes true progress and change. In direct opposition to Marinetti's statement that "poetry must be conceived as a violent assault launched against unknown forces to reduce them to submission under man" (4), Loy writes "HITHERTO the great man has achieved greatness by keeping the people small. / BUT in the Future, by inspiring the people to expand to their fullest capacity, the great man proportionately must be tremendous—a God" (150). The "unknown

forces" of Marinetti's manifesto remain ambiguous but encourage a violent response to any outside attack, while Loy encourages instead a productive force, one whose godly energy encourages an expansion of one's personal abilities. It is this evolution of the self that Loy explores at greater length within her "Feminist Manifesto."

Described by Burke as very much "a continuation of her long-standing debate with Marinetti" (Burke 179), "Feminist Manifesto" continues her re-appropriation of the Futurist language to promote a new Feminism, one whose very nature contests the misogynist undertones of Marinetti's Futurism. Burke underlines this in her emphasis on the direct parallels that can be drawn between Loy's manifesto and Marinetti's belief that "the average woman would continue to exist within the 'closed circle' of femininity, 'as a mother, as a wife, and as a lover'" ("Becoming Modern" 178-179). Lines such as "the first illusion […] to demolish is the division of women into two classes the mistress, & the mother" (Loy 154), demonstrate a clear desire to set things straight. It is however important to note that this need to rectify the limiting nature of such divisive representations of women was meant as an attack on both Marinetti and the suffragette feminists. For though "Feminist Manifesto" holds a similar desire for balance as the one found in "Aphorisms of Futurism," this harmony is attained through a more violent form of identity claiming. Where her Futurist manifesto calls for an awakening through love and acceptance of the future, her feminist manifesto calls for a destruction of women's "desire to be loved" (155), as well as a clever and perpetual subterfuge of "fragility" (156).

The surprising violence of "Feminist Manifesto" 's word choice can be understood by what Harris calls her rejection of "the reforms of contemporary rights feminism as barely significant" (Harris 17). This encourages me to believe that Loy's positioning amongst the feminists of her era was just as fraught with complications as was her relationship with the

Futurists. This is due to her inability to fully ally herself with the feminism of her era that saw "women as being in need of protection" (Harris 17). I have explored such divisions of opinion in my first chapter where my contrast of Marsden and Loy's Feminine identities shaped much of my view of Loy's British influences and her breaking from both the Victorian close-mindedness of her youth and the, as of yet, unprogressive forms of British feminism. However, stopping such a discussion to the feminisms of *The Freewoman* misses an intriguing form of feminism as of yet little explored by Loy scholars.

Valentine de Saint-Point, a French artist, writer, poet, painter, playwright, and journalist, shares much of the same influences that led to Loy's own literary and political undertakings. Having moved amongst similar Parisian circuits and been drawn to the Futurist with much the same reticence Loy shared, de Saint-Point is considered the first woman to have written a futurist manifesto. Her "Manifesto of Futurist Woman," unlike Loy's "Feminist Manifesto," was published in her lifetime (1912). The fact that a counterargument to Marinetti's "Manifesto of Futurism" already existed and that it was written by a published woman Futurist approved by Marinetti himself may have been a factor in Loy's decision to keep her own manifesto unpublished. Still, Saint-Point's views of feminism and Futurism vary distinctively enough from Loy's own study of the topics to merit a full analysis. In bringing to light de Saint-Point and Loy's similar re-appropriation of Futurism, this chapter's concluding section will explore Loy's conflicted investment in her "Feminist Manifesto," a perspective that continues my thesis' investment in the interconnected nature of early twentieth century feminist and futurist discourse.

4.2. The Futurist Woman

Despite the boisterous, exclamatory tone of Marinetti's "The Founding and the Manifesto of Futurism," its format is surprisingly traditional. This may in part be explained by its having first appeared within the pages of the French newspaper *Le Figaro*'s February 1909 edition. It being a rather centre-right national newspaper, it seems unlikely that Marinetti's manifesto would have been published at all had it explored with capitalization and boldface. That being said, Loy and de Saint-Point's use of an exclamatory boldface that is both visually interesting and politically charged only appears that much more revolutionary when contrasted with Marinetti's safer approach to the manifesto genre. It is however important to note that Marinetti's manifesto was meant to be read aloud with a chest "swell[ing] with immense pride" (Marinetti 3), not read by the casual evening coffee drinker. For what it lacks in boldness of typographic style it gains in the exclamatory nature of its text with such explosive language as "The furious sweep of madness (3)" and "so we raced on, hurling watchdogs back against the doorways" (3). Still, distanced for its historical moment, Marinetti's text falls almost silent next to the constant bold words found in Loy and de Saint-Point's own interpretations of a Futurist manifesto.

Not only does the explosive boldface of such passages as "WHAT WE NEED, WHETHER MEN OR WOMEN, IS VIRILITY" (de Saint-Point, "Manifesto of the Futurist Woman" 110) or "**Is that all you want**?" (Loy, "Feminist Manifesto" 153) add to the sense of urgency of both women's statements, but they equally drive a point forward: Futurist women (if that is what they are) will not be silenced or outdone by the masculine dominated vision of the Futurist movement. Unlike Marinetti, whose manifesto expresses revolutionary ideals without truly performing them, both Saint-Point and Loy perform the revolutionary nature of their

manifestos through equally outspoken typographical cues. Thus, Saint-Point and Loy perform a modernism of form as much as they express a modernism of ideas. In this fashion, the insistent tone found within Loy and Saint-Point's texts actually surpass "The Founding and the Manifesto of Futurism" 's political attempts in their forward moving momentum. For though Marinetti's manifesto demands that "poets must do their utmost, with ardor, splendor, and generosity, to increase the enthusiastic fervour of the primordial elements" (4), much of this fervour is lost in its destructive yet non-productive tone. Marinetti's concluding line is the best example of this: "Standing erect on the summit of the world, we fling, yet once more, our challenge to the stars" (6). The young futurists portrayed in his narrative crouch "in an open field, beneath a sad roof drummed by monotonous rain […] warming [their] hands by the dirty little fire made by […] books" (6). Having destroyed the embodiment of literature, they crouch like beggars, waiting to be found, to be challenged. Having no one to challenge them, no one to listen, they shout to the distant stars themselves. It would seem that in the very act of producing a rebellious attempt at subverting the traditional art forms, Marinetti himself can but imagine the descendants of his movement standing alone in the rain. As a direct contrast to this, de Saint-Point offers a progressive future, one where a revolutionary mother figure will produce the heroes of the future in her final exclamation: "YOU OWE HUMANITY SOME HEROES. NOW MAKE THEM" (de Saint-Point 113)!

Loy's conclusion mirrors de Saint-Point's almost perfectly in her statement that the future woman's dawning realization that "there is nothing impure in sex," an understanding of which "will constitute an incalculable & wider social regeneration than it is possible for our generation to imagine" (Loy 156). Where Loy's conclusion surpasses de Saint-Point's however is in her pushing the argument to a further level. In her Futurist manifesto, de-Saint Point proposes that

women should claim a virility of their own, one that will push them to claim their own sexual desires and by proxy produce the child heroes of the future. Loy insists instead on a sex positive mentality through the abolition of the societal understanding of sex as "impure," encouraging a complete "social regeneration." Like much of Loy's Negation aesthetic, "Feminist Manifesto" illustrates a complex multifaceted, if not at times contradictory stance. By demanding "the unconditional surgical destruction of virginity throughout-out the female population at puberty" (155), Loy insists on a revolutionary, though extreme, form of body decommodification. By destroying "virginity," a female condition still heavily portrayed as a precious commodity within misogynist societies, the revolutionary Female of Loy's manifesto can better reclaim her own identity and sexual desires, effectively removing herself from the sex market that is the Victorian marital institution. Yet, despite this evident clinical turn of phrase, seen in the use of the word "surgical," Loy nonetheless insists on avoiding the common perception of sex as "impure," an equally Victorian belief that was intimately connected with the clinical. Thus, though de Saint-Point demonstrates a more progressive form of manifesto than Marinetti's destructive one, her arguments remain direct and lacking of the poetic depth found in Loy's own attempt at a Futurist manifesto.

Of equal interest is "Feminist Manifesto" 's interesting proximity to what we might call the intertextual nature of the feminist periodicals of the early twentieth century. Where Marinetti demands the abolition of past artistic and historical occurrences in his demand for the glorification of "war—the only hygiene of the world" and a gender division through the "contempt for woman" (4), Loy encourages "a definite period of psychic development" leading to an "expression of an easy & ample interpenetration of the male & female temperaments" (155). Her portrayal of a positive future therefore comes from self-introspection as well as an

openness to the binary nature of gender identities within all beings. Saint-Point expresses a similar point in her belief that

> every superman, every hero […], every genius […], is the prodigious expression of a race and an era precisely because he is simultaneously composed of feminine and masculine elements, femininity and masculinity: which is to say, a complete being. (101)

Where the argument varies however is in the subject to which her manifesto is addressed. De Saint-Point's manifesto retools Marinetti's Futurism in an opposition to his "contempt of women." It is a proposition that women should "RETURN TO [their] SUBLIME INSTINCT; TO VIOLENCE AND CRUELTY" (113), a demand that shifts the gender violence instead of truly opposing it. By mirroring the violence of Marinetti's Futurism, de Saint-Point falls in the "Parasitism, & Prostitution" (Loy 154) categories Loy insists on avoiding. A "parasite" in her reclaiming instead of retooling of Marinetti's futurist language, she remains within the binary gender languages that perpetuate such gender violence.

In seeking a "period of psychic development" Loy encourages a "harmony of the race" (155), one that does use a similar violent discourse as Marinetti and de Saint-Point's, but equally uses a specifically intimate tone, one addressed to specific female identities such as the "**Inadequate Women**" (153) of the feminist movements of the early twentieth century, the "**relative impersonality**" of the "women who adapt themselves to a theoretical valuation of their sex (154), as well as the parasite, the prostitute, **the mistress, & the mother** (154). Though these terms may originally come off as negative, they are in fact means of underlining specific discourses circulating amongst the women of the periodical, feminist, and literary circles. It is through naming these various identities that Loy can better illustrate her ideal "superior woman"

(155) by imposing her as the "negative" alternative to these various identities, one that negates the misogynist stereotypes imposed by the gender inequalities of her era. The creation of this "superior woman" therefore becomes a revolutionary Feminine in its being both gendered yet separate from the negative associations of a traditionally gendered characterization. Where Marinetti's Futurism necessitates a stereotypically gendered form of violence, Loy's manifesto enumerates what her "superior woman" is not as opposed to what she is, effectively avoiding what would otherwise have been a limited sense of self. In so doing, Loy, like the correspondences found within the Freewoman, offers an open discussion to her readers, a chance to define themselves not by any specific category she might have imposed on to them, but by the productive negative space opened in opposition, a location of self-identification and new identity formations.

5. Conclusion: Something Old, Something New

Throughout this thesis, I have underlined Loy's avoidance of binary categories both in her poetry and works of non-fiction. Yet, in an attempt at understanding her unique vantage point as a New Woman, woman writer and woman futurist at a time when various political agendas were only just emerging (whether it be Pound's early attempts at building a Modernist canon or the limiting effect of a dominantly masculine editorial elite), I have utilized rather traditional labels to categories Loy's countless poetic voices. My first chapter connected Loy to the first wave feminist writings found in *The Freewoman*, my second drew attention to Loy's alternative to domestic writing, and finally my third followed Loy's Futurist influences. Though my thesis has attempted to limit any formal reading of Loy as occupying one single genre or identity, I have nonetheless counted on specific literary traditions and political movements to guide my understanding of Loy's achievements. This has assisted me in locating specific instances where Loy has both thwarted and reshaped these various categories. In essence, by comparing her work with the genres and movements she herself does not fully fall under, I have argued that Loy's Negation aesthetics occupies a parallel yet contrasting position amongst the numerous literary spaces she encountered. It is my contention that this parallel positioning, what my thesis has called the "negative space," has led to a broad scope of feminist discourses whenever Loy's work has re-emerged. It is with the intent of adding to this dialogue that I will conclude this thesis with a comparative analysis of Loy's "feminism" and Sarah Hoagland's lesbian separatism.

As stated in my introduction, the publication of Loy relevant books as well as the surge of academic interest in her work have coincided with the rise of second and third wave feminism. As feminist scholars began to question their place in academia, literature, and the world at large,

so their search for progressive thinkers such as Loy become more insistent. It is my belief that this is the very reason Loy's work—though often barred from the literary canon and the broader discourse of the modernist "greats[16]"—will continue to re-emerge in times of important feminist inquiry. For this reason, as a conclusion to this thesis, I would like to attempt to answer one final question: Should Loy's work remain as intimately bound to the various historical forms of feminism as it is now?

I am aware of the difficult task I set forth by comparing the views of an early twentieth century poet/artist/theorist grounded in a modernist perspective on gender issues with any form of contemporary understanding of similar questions. Imposing a contemporary viewpoint of any sort on that of a writer whose time has come and gone threatens to efface said author's vision altogether. For if one is to take a poet such as Loy and wonder if there is still anything left to mention about her connection with feminism, one must equally ponder upon what is lost and what is gained in continuing the dialogue between woman writers of the past and the political and academic forms of feminist dialectics. If we turn our attention back to Toril Moi's "I am not a woman writer: About women, literature and feminist theory today," we might find the start of an answer to these proposed questions.

In her concluding section "What is literature?," Moi asks a very basic question: "Why should women write? Why should we care about literature?" (268) The question comes as a culmination of Moi's historical analysis of why the very concept of a woman writer remains a marginal topic in feminist theory. She, like myself, cannot help but wonder why we insist on

[16] In using the descriptor modernist "greats" I call attention to Conover's own use of the term in his introduction to his *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*. As he writes, Loy has "never been called great before, [but] great' modern writers—among them Basil Bunting, Eliot, Pound, Stein, and Williams— [have nonetheless] praised her work" (xii)

separating our understanding of gender from our author's literary identities, why—as she puts it— there is a "loss of interest in questions relating to women and aesthetics and women and creativity" (259). After all, isn't the leading consensus that we have somehow beaten back the gender wars? That we no longer need to know the gender of an author to truly appreciate their work? Even after having parsed through countless feminist periodicals, countless works of literature and theoretical texts written by women, I am left uncertain as to the importance of one's gender on the political and historical impact of a work of literature. A passage from Moi's text only deepens my indecisiveness:

> Literature is the archive of a culture. We turn to literature to discover what makes other human beings suffer and laugh, hate and love, how people in other countries live, and how men and women experienced life in other historical periods. To turn women into second-class citizens in the realm of literature is to say that women's experiences of existence and of the world are less important than men's. (268)

Following such an optic, I cannot help but feel that the very nature of both Loy's poetry and works of non-fiction remains intimately connected to her experience of the world as a woman. This gendered perspective may not be traditional for a woman of the early twentieth century, but it remains gendered female. In fact, it is Loy's very non-traditional nature that grants her a unique vision. By insisting on non-absolutes, by dismissing traditional gender roles, Loy opens the door to a specific feminine reality, that of the fashionable outcast. In turn, by doing so, Loy grants the reader the rare occasion to witness the perspective of a "feminist" that was truly before her time, an outsider that was just as opposed to the early feminists of her era as she was the misogynist art movements of her time.

One example of Loy's conflicted relationship with the early feminist movement lies in her evident concern with the institutions and structures that oppressed women. Her "Feminist Manifesto" questions the confidence women place in "economic legislation, vice-crusades & uniform education" (Loy 153). The ways in which women were—and continue to be—dominated by systems of law, morality, and education is evident and unavoidable, but what is interesting is the perceptiveness and daring Loy demonstrates in the writing of this piece. As lesbian-feminist philosopher Sarah Hoagland expresses over seventy years later: "It is not clear, with a few notable exceptions since the onset of patriarchy, that women have resisted" the relationship of dominance and subordination between men and women (Hoagland, "Separating from Heterosexualism" 521-22). Though such an argument might be questioned, her indication that there are "a few notable exceptions" is of interest here. Though Loy may not have considered herself a feminist, or even much of a women's advocate for that matter, her "Feminist Manifesto" performs much of what Hoagland's text hopes for. Though I cannot state with absolute certainty that Hoagland was influenced by Loy's manifesto, or that she even read the text, the similarities are staggering.

Within her text "Separating from Heterosexualism," Hoagland explores the topic of Lesbian Ethics, arguing for a "moral revolution" (521) in opposition to the less productive "moral reform" (520). Much like Loy, whose struggle it was to avoid the dichotomic nature of the sex radical and Social-Purity feminisms of her era, Hoagland felt that "in recognizing only moral reform, traditional ethics discourages us from radically examining the values around which existing principles revolve" (520). Thus, much like Loy who felt that "NO scratching on the surface of the rubbish heap of tradition, will bring about **Reform**" and that "the only method is **Absolute Demolition**" (153), Hoagland demands that we avoid the moral reform approach in

its “attempt to bring human action into greater conformity with existing ethical principles” (519). Thus, even though we have yet to have a historical connection between Hoagland’s argument and Loy’s earlier articulations of similar topics, the arguments and very words both use are too similar to disregard.

A key passage of Hoagland’s piece indicates that to understand sexism is to analyze

> how institutional power is in the hands of men, how men discriminate against women, how society classifies men as the norm and women as passive and inferior, how male institutions objectify women, how society excludes women from participation as full human beings, and how what has been perceived as normal male behaviour is also violence against women. (522)

Evidently this passage underlines through a much more direct route, much of the structures at play in the oppressive process that is the continued dominance of patriarchy. Loy’s piece, much like her poetry, uses a less straight forward technique, she writes: “Women if you want to realise yourselves—you are on the eve of a devastating psychological upheaval—all your pet illusions must be unmasked—the lies of centuries have got to go” (153). The key difference between both approaches is that Hoagland’s piece enumerates bluntly the forms of oppression Loy describes simply as “pet illusions” and “lies of centuries.”

Should we read the simplicity of Loy’s descriptors as a generation of women unable to fully accept the scope of the exclusion Hoagland describes? Or should we instead question Hoagland’s need for such enumerations when the work of Loy demonstrates awareness of such a list at least seventy years earlier? Both questions are valid and demonstrate a clear discontent with how patriarchal oppression has limited many feminist debates to a battle of words. Where Loy expresses the uselessness of “scratching on the surface of the rubbish heap of tradition”

(153), Hoagland condemns "moral reform" as being ineffective in any attempt at "radically examining the values around which existing principles revolve" (520). There is something immensely troubling in such a similarity, in the seventy-year gap that led to little if any true form of "moral revolution" as Hoagland conceives of it.

However, it would be foolish to limit the Hoagland/Loy comparison to one of equal ideology. Hoagland's focus is on a moral revolution, one grounded in a "Lesbian Ethics" that "hol[ds] certain possibilities" (535). These possibilities, held within the term "lesbian," which she sees as free from the "dominance and subordination" imposed on women (535), are entirely divorced and opposed to a union with any form of masculinity. Loy's writings, though well aware of how to "violat[e] the rules of heterosexual discourse" (Conover, "Introduction" xiv), were not completely devoid of its presence. Though it is a call for a break with male ideals and male oppression, though it calls for a maternity based on choice and strong womanhood, "Feminist Manifesto" ends with a cold irony. As she writes, "woman for her happiness must retain her deceptive fragility of appearance, combined with indomitable will, irreducible courage, & abundant health" (156). Loy often used irony with a humorous twist as a means of adding coy comedy to otherwise dark subject matter. Her conclusion however, hinting at "an incalculable & wider social regeneration than it is possible for our generation to imagine," implies a lowering of her own will to continue the affront. She realizes that despite her best wishes at "wrenching" from the multiple forms of oppression that hold her back, she remains bound to her time and to her place.

It would take a seventy-year gap for texts such as Hoagland's to reclaim Loy's hopes for what Harris calls a "radically new woman" (17). Through numerous feminist generational shifts, Loy's belief that "love is […] inextricable from the degradations of femininity" (Harris 18)

reframed itself within the separatist argument against the heterosexual framework which Hoagland saw as inhibiting any possibility for a "'moral agency' independent of the master/slave virtues" (535). The fictitious Femininity Loy was forced to use as mask to withstand the limitations upon her gender was one fraught with complications. Unable to be both feminine and fully independent, she created a pseudo-feminism, one she hoped would eventually create a "wider social regeneration" (Loy 156). Why neither Loy nor Hoagland were able to fully accomplish their revolutions only goes to demonstrate how unprepared we still are for Loy's "Reform" and "Absolute Demolition" (Loy 153).

Having struggled to define the undefinable in Loy's work, I have come to realize that much of what has led to Loy's absence from modernist anthologies comes from this very issue. For though current debates on gender issues have made some progressive leaps since the conflictual interactions found within *the Freewoman*, the identity of the "woman writer" and what her gendered voice entails in the retracing of our literary history remains nebulous. If a message of any sort is to be taken from Loy's unclassifiable literary work, it is that overly binary classification systems have oppressed much of our more progressive forms of literature and political ideologies, thus engendering much of the bigoted nature of our society's cultural "composition." Until the question of gender becomes entirely moot for any form of canon formation, progressive thinkers such as Loy and Hoagland will remain essential to any attempt at promoting a more inclusive literary iteration of our reality.

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